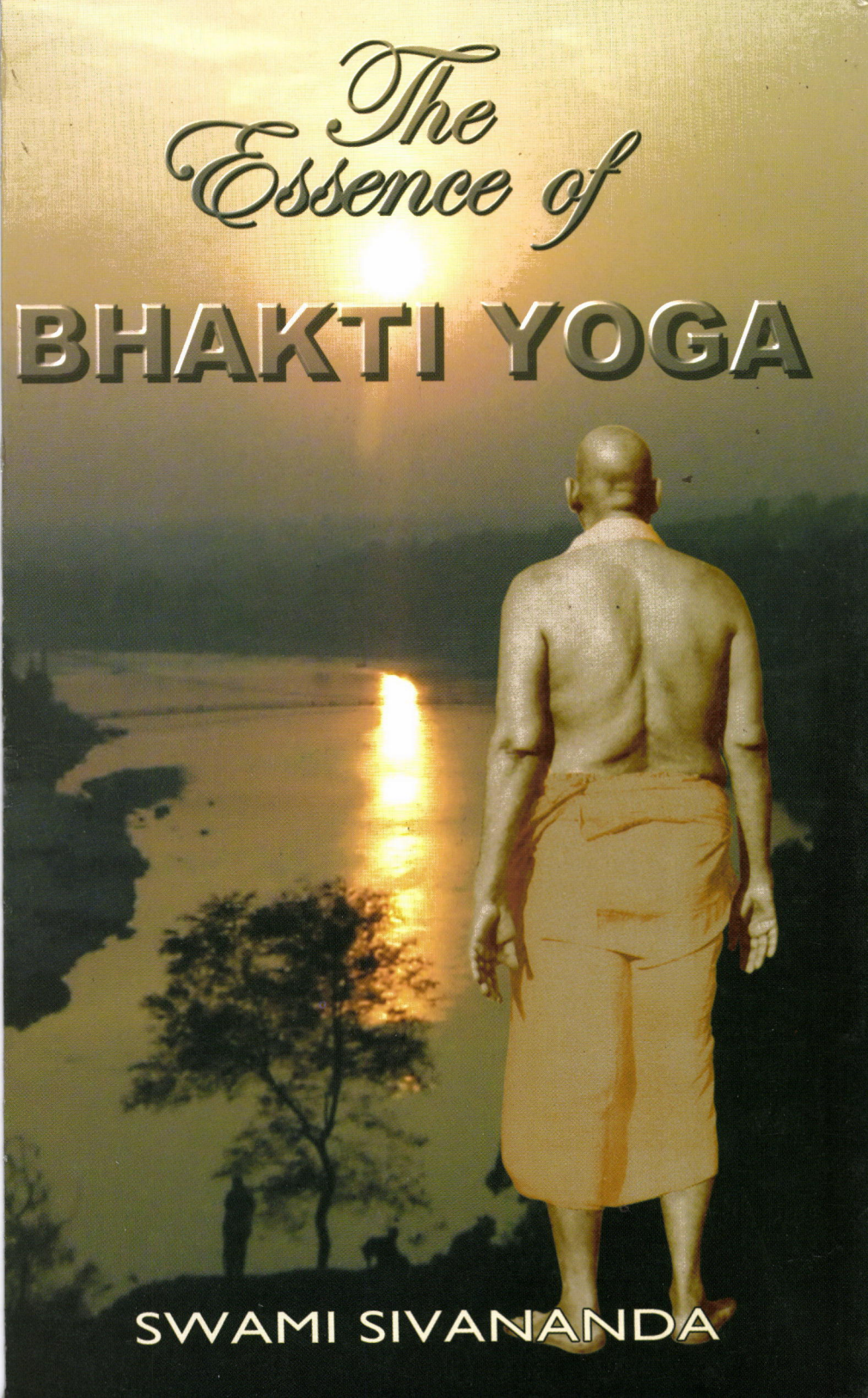
The Essence of BHAKTI YOGA



SWAMI SIVANANDA

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SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

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Dedicated

to

All Sincere Aspirants

Who Tread

The Path of

Devotion

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

Born on the 8th September, 1887, in the illustrious family of Sage Appayya Dikshitar and several other renowned saints and savants, Sri Swami Sivananda had a natural flair for a life devoted to the study and practice of Vedanta. Added to this was an inborn eagerness to serve all and an innate feeling of unity with all mankind.

His passion for service drew him to the medical career; and soon he gravitated to where he thought that his service was most needed. Malaya claimed him. He had earlier been editing a health journal and wrote extensively on health problems. He discovered that people needed right knowledge most of all; dissemination of that knowledge he espoused as his own mission.

It was divine dispensation and the blessing of God upon mankind that the doctor of body and mind renounced his career and took to a life of renunciation to qualify for ministering to the soul of man. He settled down at Rishikesh in 1924, practised intense austerities and shone as a great Yogi, saint, sage and Jivanmukta.

In 1932 Swami Sivananda started the Sivanandashram. In 1936 was born The Divine Life Society. In 1948 the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was organised. Dissemination of spiritual knowledge and training of people in Yoga and Vedanta were their aim and object. In 1950 Swamiji undertook a lightning tour of India and Ceylon. In 1953 Swamiji convened a 'World Parliament of Religions'. Swamiji is the author of over 300 volumes and has disciples all over the world, belonging to all nationalities, religions and creeds. To read Swamiji's works is to drink at the Fountain of Wisdom Supreme. On 14th July, 1963 Swamiji entered Mahasamadhi.

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

PREFACE

Ask any one: "Is there a thing which you value greater than your life?" Most of the people thus questioned will laugh at you; a few, who might declare that they do value, say their wife, son, honour, etc., more than their own life, would fail to prove themselves true when put to the test. One ochre-robed Sannyasin with an arresting personality will smile—obviously pitying the ignorance that the question betrays, and reply: "Yes! Surely, that is God." Bewildered, you look up: that sage is Swami Sivananda.

The versatile genius who has trodden the path of Yoga and mastered it in all its aspects, boldly proclaims to the world that the foundation of Yoga and the basis of his achievement is BHAKTI. All through his writings, even on the most abstruse Advaita philosophy runs this golden streak of Devotion, Love. He has proved by his very renunciation that God or the Atman, is dearer to him than his life. And, so did he thunder forth on the Gramophone Record: "There is somthing dearer than your life itself...."

One could see him doing Kirtan and dancing in Ecastasy, hear his discourses on Bhakti—then would one realise the depth of his love for God. Need we add that any work, especially on Bhakti, from the pen of such a one should be highly elevating? Not only this volume, but all his works on Bhakti and Kirtan, have cast a spell of that divine impulse which urges man to God.

Human nature is to love. The average man is mostly governed by his emotions. He feels stifled if he cannot direct his love towards some object or other; if not a human being, at least an animal, a dog or a cat. this sort of love is gross, false, illusory and unworthy in the end.

But the pursuit of God through Bhakti or loving devotion is the sweetest and best of human endeavours. In fact the mobilisation of human feelings in the search of God is the true alchemy. The human heart panting in love for the Divine is the real sublimation. Human love triumphantly seeking God for its prize is the highest virtue and excellence.

Many have been the apostles of Bhakti in the annals of India's spiritual history. Even the founders of the schools of high philosophical thought have practised and preached devotion to the Lord.

It is the greatest and finest of arts to love God absolutely artlessly. Its subtle technique consists in cultivating a permanent psychosis which is the very stuff of the highest and best poetry, noblest philosophy, and the ultimate aim of arts, sciences and religions. Psychology applied to this line of life is the rarest achievement of Saints and Sages.

If you can burn all the marrow of your bones to light up the house of your love and derive ecstatic happiness in so doing all through your individual existence whether here or hereafter, if you can go on loving without ever expecting your love to be reciprocated, nay, even if trampled down mercilessly, then take to the path of Bhakti. As such Bhakti is self-recompensing. Its sweetness enriches you with every fiery ordeal you pass through like perfume that grows intenser with the crushing of the rose. In the *Essence of Bhakti Yoga* is set forth the perfumer's rare art of squeezing your love-laden heart to yield the riches of Bhakti or Divine Love and devotion.

This Path of Devotion is not without its snags and pitfalls. The love-laden heart of the Lord's devotee gets so high strung at times that its tendrils may snap any instant. In utmost bewilderment of sweetest yearning, patience is exhausted. Life becomes dull and dreary. The body becomes a burden.

Vision gets blurred and the path onward is not discernible. Mira, in one such moment, set out to drown herself. Something is then needed by way of a specific to save this soul from sinking into helpless despondency. Nothing can excel the Guru's hand; it is the only specific; in its absence, the word of the Guru works magic. The utterances of the world's realised souls are truly magical.

In the *Essence of Bhakti Yoga* has been laid out in great detail the course of Bhakti Yoga from start to finish. Every milestone has been clearly indicated. Every next step towards the goal has been carefully guided. Every chance of getting into despondency has been eliminated and by going into minute details every effort has been made to rescue the despondent soul.

Bhakti Yoga is not without its method, though it is the method of striking the fountain of emotional sweetness and rightly guiding the leaping nectar of devotional striving. Properly canalised it leads to speedy self-fulfilment. As such, Bhakti Yoga is a hidden science.

To shed light on this difficult Science is beyond the powers of the intellect and the imagination, and is possible only for one who has experimented the principles of this Science on himself and realised its truths.

The *Essence of Bhakti Yoga* coming as it does from the inspired pen of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is, therefore, a rare opportunity for the reading public and the surest guide for the Bhakti Yogi aspirant. It unfolds in the simplest language the secrets of the emotions of "Bhakti" or Divine Love. It analyses the whole psychology of Bhakti and explains the significance of every element of it. It gives ample guidance in the difficult art of building those elements which constitute the psychosis of God-consciousness. It makes the practice of God's presence easy.

It also makes the study of the poetics and rhetorics of emotions a very serene affair. This study chastens and subdues the mind instead of making it turbulent as in the case of the study of the usual *Rasas* or poetic sentiments, in literature. As such it solves the difficult educational problem: "How can the *Rasas* be studied without arousing passion?" It combines religious study with meditation. It leaves ample scope of exercise to the teacher and the taught alike to find out apt illustrations from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. The *Essence of Bhakti Yoga* can, therefore, be easily adapted as text-book for the benefit of the young.

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

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ESSENCE OF BHAKTI YOGA

BOOK ONE

ESSENCE OF BHAKTI

PHILOSOPHY OF BHAKTI

Bhakti is devotion or unselfish love. This is the literal meaning of the word. It comes from the root 'Bhaj'—to serve or be deeply interested in. 'Bhaj Sevayam' is the Sanskrit root. Bhakti is, therefore, an intense attachment to God or deep interest in God and things concerned with God.

The innate nature of all beings is to love an external object. We cannot but love or cherish something in the heart. For, truly, the Absolute alone is existent. Man is only an ego apparently separated from it. Love for external things is an unconscious internal urge to become unified with everything. For, in reality, man is everything, the Absolute Itself. He wants everything. Love is the forerunner of Experience. Love is the craving. Experience is the fulfilment of it. None can live without love for something. "The creator pierced the senses with outward activity," and that rule applies to one and all here. The mind is the main sense of perception, for it is only the mind that perceives through the various channels of the senses. The senses do not work when the mind does not.

But it is folly on our part to allow the mind to run extrovert in all directions. The dissipated rays of the mind take interest in countless objects of the universe, seen and heard equally. Yogins have come to the conclusion that the mind that is centred in one point of space at all times can do and undo things with supernatural force. It is the concentrated ray of the sun passing through a lens that burns things focussed through it, and not so much the rays

that are scattered here and there. Mind has to be concentrated on one Substance, be it this or that. The mind should not jump from one thing to another. This is the way of Samsara. This should be stopped by controlling the mind through one-pointedness of it. Concentration is done either on a point in space (Bhakti Marga), or on the entire existence (Jnana Marga). The annihilation of thought is the death of individuality which is the experience of Absoluteness.

But man can concentrate his mind on any object. He can concentrate his mind on his wife and children as he usually does. But this is not the concentration or love that is meant here. Meditation on and love towards the objects of earthly pleasure are binding chains which hurl down the Jiva to many cycles of birth and death. We mean here concentration on and love for God. This love of unselfish origin is a ladder to Final Emancipation

Emotions are generally considered as a hindrance in perfect Realisation. But only certain emotions are of a binding nature while certain others will liberate the Jiva from bondage. The conception of God does not rouse in man any binding emotion. It is pure emotion devoid of carnality and attachment. One cannot develop earthly love towards God. The conception of God and love for God rouses the purest of emotions and it is far better than evil emotions which overpower man day and night. Those who cannot still all emotions must have at least pure emotions. This is the significance of divine emotion in Bhakti-Marga. Love for God can never be the type of love cherished towards wife, children and property. There is much difference, though, even love for God is given on earthly colouring like that of son, husband, father, friend etc., by some devotees who find it difficult to break all earthly connections at a stretch.

How, then, does love for God gives us Liberation from Samsara? Man is an egoistic entity. His only enemy

is the ego. He feels that he is entirely different from other things of the world. He is convinced that he is sharply marked off from the universe by his physical body. He is sure that he is only the body even though he may try to deny it in any way. When he says 'I' he always points out to his chest and not to the yonder tree. Many unfortunate Vedantins also feel that when they assert "I am Brahman," they mean only that the body is Brahman. It is very difficult to separate the 'I' from the notion of the body. When one says "I am Ramakrishna" he means only that "the body is Ramakrishna." None can get rid of this notion of the body as the real Self. The ideal of all Yogas is to root out this sense of ego. And Bhakti Yoga is a method to kill the sense of separateness or egoism. It annihilates the modifications of the mind and fills the individual with Universal Consciousness.

A Bhakta says: "O Lord! I am Thine. All is Thine. I am not a separate entity. I have no power to do anything. You are doing everything taking myself as an instrument. O Lord! You are everywhere. I cannot even move, for You are everywhere. I am walking over Your Body. I am not able to live separately for I am seeing You everywhere. You appear as the man and the woman, and as the old man that totters with a stick on the road. You have become everything. I have no independence. I am Your slave. A slave has no optional views. He can do only what the Master commands him to do. I am doing nothing. You only are doing through me. You are the Doer. You are the Enjoyer. I am nothing. Thy Will be done."

This is the highest type of Love. This is Divine Love. The ego cannot assert itself for God alone is everywhere. The mind cannot modify itself into Vrittis of sense-objects for, to him, there is no object except God. Who is there to be loved or hated? The Bhakta is therefore blissful at all times. The mind cannot think of anything. For, everything is God. *"Yatra yatra mano yati tatra tatra samadhayah."*

Wherever the mind goes there it experiences Samadhi, for it does not find an object of enjoyment. God is filling every speck of space. The whole world is clothed with the Glory of God. The saint and the sinner, the virtuous and the vicious, the good and the bad, the man and the animal, all are forms of God. How can the mind deal with them in an undivine way? There the mind experiences Samadhi. The mind has Consciousness. But it has no object. This is Samadhi. Samadhi is thoughtless Consciousness, objectless Knowledge. This is Para Bhakti. This is one with Vedantic Realisation. Vedanta Sakshatkara and Para Bhakti are only two names for one and the same thing. The effect of both is annihilation of the ego or the destruction of the mind. The mind cannot live without an object of perception. God, who is supremely powerful, supremely wise and supremely blissful is pervading the entire atmosphere and the earth. He is the earth and the heaven. He is the father and the mother, brother and sister. God is the consummation of all love and aspiration, desire and ambition. He is the stoppage of all mental Vrittis. He is the ideal to be attained.

Objective consciousness is dead when the presence of God everywhere is felt. The sense-objects are transformed into the glory of Divinity. Wife is no more an object of lust, and money is not a property to be coveted. All is God and nothing but God. All are to be worshipped. "The ass, the dog and the Chandala are to be saluted," said Sri Krishna to Uddhava, "for all is God." This is equal to saying *"Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma."* There is no difference.

The illustration of the two varieties of Samadhi is found in the Rasa Lila of Sri Krishna. At first the Gopis perceive that all is Sri Krishna alone. This is equal to Savikalpa Samadhi. Afterwards they feel that even they themselves are Krishna only. This is equal to Nirvikalpa Samadhi where the sense of ego is absent. The Srimad-

Bhagavata is the Bible of the devotees. It illustrates the various kinds of Rasas and modes of developing Bhakti.

"Control the mind, annihilate the ego." This is the essence of all Yogas. Whatever be the name given to the Yoga and whatever may be the methods employed therein, the ideal to be achieved is annihilation of the mind and the ego. And this is the ideal of the Bhakti Yoga which is a very sweet and easy method of procedure. One has not got to curb his emotions and one has not got to run to the forests. He has to direct his emotions to God and he has to see God as present in the world. This is the essence of Bhakti-Sadhana. Bhakti is thus only a reflection of the love for the Self which the Upanishads declare. Only the names or different; one calls it Self, another calls it God. Names do not matter much. It is feeling that counts. And that is the same.

Self-surrender is the highest form of Bhakti. Self-surrender is surrender of the ego or individuality. And what remains is the Absolute of the Vedantins. Thus there is no difference between Vedanta and the highest form of Bhakti. Bhakta surrenders the ego and a Vedantin disintegrates the ego. Anyhow the ego is not there in both. Their ideals are the same. Whether one eats rice or wheat, it is all the same. The purpose of both is to appease hunger. And there is no quarrel between the two. Whether you follow Bhakti or Vedanta the effect is the annihilation of the ego. This is the truth.

There are two varieties of Bhaktas. The inferior type of Bhakta feels that every thing is God except himself. He feels that he is the only one who is not God, and all else is God. This is the lower Bhakti and the presence of the ego hampers the ultimate experience. The higher kind of Bhakta feels that he himself is included in God and that he has no independent existence. His ego is rooted out completely and this is the realisation of Para Bhakti or Vedanta. Here his emotions stop and he becomes a calm

ocean without waves. His mind is stilled and it merges into the Universal Truth. This is the culmination of Bhakti which supreme devotees like the Gopis of Vrindavan and Gauranga Mahaprabhu experienced.

Love for God should be unselfish. There should be no earthly motive behind the love for God. Otherwise, it becomes only a modification of infatuation and delusion. Arta, Jijnasu and Artharthi are all selfish Bhaktas. They cannot have the highest fruit of devotion. They are deluded by earthliness. Only a Jnani is a true selfless Bhakta, flooded with the majesty and grandeur of emotionless peace. The highest kind of Bhakta is one who wants nothing from God. He merely wants God. He says: "O Lord! I want Thee. Nothing else do I want! What is there which I have to get after getting Thee, the source and the root of everything?" When wheat is obtained, bread, Parotta, Halva, and all its modifications are obtained. When gold is obtained, all ornaments are obtained. When God is attained, everything else is attained. The devotee is lost in the consciousness of God. He has plunged into the ocean of Bliss. He has taken a bath in the sea of Nectar. He has drunk deep the essence of Immortality. He has become an Apta-Kama, for he has attained God.

The text-book of the highest kind of Bhaktas is the Srimad-Bhagavata. It embodies the great ideals of Renunciation, Devotion and Knowledge brought to a stage of unblemished perfection. The Purana, far above what a Purana is supposed to be like, is the cream of the devotional literature of the Hindus. It is the wealth of the lovers of God. It is a book of divine wisdom. It advocates the path of non-action. Sri Krishna-Chaitanya (Gouranga) is said to have been considering this work as the greatest of Indian spiritual productions. It is a great authority on pure Spiritual Dharma, not as a means for Artha and Kama, but directly for Moksha. It has a fascination even for those who are keenly alive in finding out its defects. The whole body of

the work is completely saturated with high expositions of Bhakti, Vairagya and Jnana—Devotion, Renunciation and Wisdom. The Ideal of Renunciation and Knowledge of Rishabhadeva, Jadabharata and the Brahmana of Avanti, the Devotion of Dhruva, Prahlada and Ambarisha, the Wisdom of Narada, Kapila, and above all the immortal life and Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Krishna to His devoted disciple Uddhava, form the nucleus of the Srimad-Bhagavata.

It is a grave mistake to misrepresent and cavil at Bhakti, for the true spirit of every religion implies the adoration and love of God and the desire for Union with God. The highest conception of perpetual Bliss is not mere prostration and service, but a loving union with the Eternal. In emphasising true Devotion as a method for Salvation, it is not meant that service and love of humanity should be paid a deaf ear to; for all is God, and he who serves humanity serves God. He that loveth his neighbour, loveth God. The Bhakta identifies himself with all the beings of the world; he feels the universe as a mere manifestation of God, which is nothing short of Advaitic Realisation. Those men who truly love God with sincere feeling, cannot go astray. They do not perish. Even the sinner and the Sudra is lifted up to the magnanimous height of Emancipation. The kindness of God is immeasurable. God illumines their intellect, and takes care of them at all times. The Bhagavadgita and the Bhagavata are witnesses to this fact. The Bhakta will be guided by God, and illuminated with Wisdom for the attainment of the Supreme Blessedness.

THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE

You can notice Lord's grace in every inch of His creation. In a hot summer you enjoy the delicious sweet juice of grapes, cucumber, oranges and pomegranates and cool Ganga water of Rishikesh and Haridwar. This is Lord's grace. When you suffer from any serious ailment, you get immediate relief and cure from herbs. This is Lord's grace. When you walk in a dark night, the stars twinkle and throw light on your path. This is Lord's grace.

When you are unable to bear extreme pain you become unconscious. This is Lord's grace. When the weather is sultry, a gentle breeze blows and refreshes you. This is Lord's grace.

Lord's grace will descend in proportion to the degree of surrender. The more the surrender, the more the grace.

Kathopanishad says in a thundering voice: "Not by study or discourses, not by argument, not by intelligence is the Self attained. He whom the Lord chooses attains Self-realisation. He reveals Himself to such a chosen person."

The subtle forms of lust, anger, egoism, pride, etc., can only be totally destroyed through the grace of the Lord. However hard you may strive and do Sadhana, these subtle forms cannot be eradicated through your Sadhana alone. The Lord's grace completely purifies your heart.

It is the Lord only who stirs the aspirants to do Purushartha or right exertion.

You should not sit idle and say "Lord's grace will do everything for me. Why should I do any Sadhana?" This is wrong philosophy. God helps those who help themselves. God's grace will descend on those persons only who exert. You cannot expect the Lord to do self-surrender for you. Be up and doing. Strive. Plod. Persevere. The Lord will shower His grace upon you.

Mira abandoned everything. She renounced kingdom, husband, relatives, friends and property. She remembered her Lord Krishna, whole day and night. She shed tears of Prem. She sang His praise with single-minded devotion. She gave up food. Her body got emaciated. Her mind was ever absorbed in Lord Krishna. Only then, did Lord Krishna shower His grace upon her.

The Lord has five duties. He is Karta (actor), Akarta (non-actor), Anyatha Karta. He veils the Jiva (Tirodhana, Tirobhava). He removes the veil through His grace (Anugraha).

People will become idle and say "The Lord will do everything for me. Why should I do any Sadhana? I depend upon His grace alone." In order to remove the inertia, Sri Vasishtha and others have preached the "Purushartha Vada." In reality it is all Lord's grace only. Even a leaf or an atom will not move without the sanction of the Lord.

May you all obtain Lord's grace through faith and devotion! May Lord shower His grace upon you all.

Glory to the Lord and His grace (Kripa, Anugraha, Prasad).

THE DIVINE NAME

Bhakti in essence is twofold: on the one hand there is an intense attachment towards God nurtured by deep emotion, and on the other, an earnest urge of love for Him. When these two elements are combined, we find Bhakti to be either an attachment emerging out of love or love being manifested itself as an attachment. Either we take love or attachment, the essential feature in Bhakti is that this feeling is in relation to the Highest—the supreme Lovable One who is Real and imperishable, and surely not in relation to the objects of the world that are transitory and therefore, unreal. Such a love or devotion, as it may be termed, assumes various forms of expression and goes by different names. Kirtan or narration in poetry or prose of singing the glory of Lord, or more popularly, singing the Name of the Lord, is one of them.

Any name denotes a particular concept; it is rather a verbal embodiment of a concept. Whatever the object of conception may be, either general or particular, either gross or subtle, visionary or real, the name is essentially associated with it. It gives a clear, adequate expression to a particular form or object that is associated with it, so as to enable us to comprehend and distinctly retain it in our mind.

The Name is a verbal embodiment of the conception of the Supreme Being who is known by different names and forms in different times and climes. The Supreme is Infinite, and as it is not always possible for the common man to conceive of what is beyond the perception of the finite mind, they symbolise this Infinite Truth as forms, symbols or objects that vary according to their respective tendencies or mode of perception. Though in the initial stage there is difference and distinction among various names and their associated objects, but ultimately, when a habit of repetition of the Name is formed and the divine consciousness is kept ever awake, then there remains no distinction between the Name and the associated idea or object, the intuitive knowledge of the Supreme reveals in the Name itself. For, the basis of all names and forms is the one Primal Being who manifests Himself under different names and forms as per the faiths and tendencies of the different sects and races of different times and places.

Harmonious, rhythmical note produces a distinctive image. It is not an imagination. For every sound there is a particular image. It has been scientifically proved that a certain particular sound produces a certain particular figure over some distinct surface. So it is reasonably believed that the respective names of God associated with their respective forms can also produce their images on the mental surface. Through continuous repetition it forms a deep-rooted impression in the mind of the repetitioner who ultimately attains God-Vision.

There is an unfathomable depth, intense sweetness and charm in the Lord's Name. It is beyond the futile explanation of the limited intellect. It is a thing knowable only through experience. The music first thrills the nerves, harmonises them and then mysteriously acts upon the mind. The sincere devotee loses himself in divine ecstasy. The worldly mind cannot grasp or perceive this state of intense emotion. The Lord's Name is all-bliss, and when it is

chanted, the mind merges in its bliss, it loses its individual entity in the bliss: it becomes one with the Bliss itself.

God and His Name are identical; they are inseparable. He dwells where His Name is sung. The whole atmosphere becomes sanctified. Peace, purity and bliss prevail there. His Name carries the message of love. His Name frees the soul from affliction, unrest and bondage. His Name knows no barrier or distinction. His Name purifies the vicious lower self and elevates it to sublimity of universal consciousness and transcendent God-head.

In ordinary self-consciousness there is the duality between the repetitioner and the Name. It is discursive: it is within the fields of common experience, it is confined within the rigid categories of the mind of limited conceptions. Ultimately the ordinary self-consciousness elevates into a transcendental experience, into a state of super-consciousness. The repetitioner and the Name become one. The eternally revealed Truth reveals to himself. He realises his oneness with the Supreme. The senses of duality—the gulf of separateness between the finite and the infinite—is removed. The dawn of intuition leads him from finitude to infinitude, from bondage to freedom, from darkness to Light, from mortality to Immortality. He only experiences his delight in the Divine. He does not even have the inclination to analyse his delight or its source, he will find that is but his love for God. He is not conscious of anything other than God. To him everything is only the manifestation of God. His all-absorbing love for God pierces through the names and forms of the universe, the universe as a whole, and in its multiphased appearance present themselves to him only as God. He feels the same intensity of love to the animate and inanimate objects of the world.

The glory of the Divine Name cannot be obviously established through reasoning or discursive arguments. It can be experienced only through faith and belief. A finite,

limited intellect surely cannot understand the nature of the infinite or the limitless. There is no limit of God's Name. The scriptures present us His innumerable Names. It means His Names are unreckonable and therefore, infinite. So, how can a finite intellect comprehend that which transcends finitude?

All Glory to His all-blissful, all-pure, omnipotent Name that liberates one from the shackles of earthly bondage and leads him to the illimitable domain of peace, bliss, and immortality! All glory to those blessed ones who take delight in His Name, sustain themselves by His Name and live to merge in His Name!

PRAYER

As children, we pray to our parents, elders and guardians at the time of our need: we seek their help, their guidance. When we grow into adolescence, we learn to pray to ourselves—to our latent abilities and strength: we try to be self-supported without being dependent on others' aid. But there is a limitation to this prayer. When we feel that we are in need of something else which is beyond our capacity, which is not always humanly possible, we resign ourselves to God, and pray for His help, for His guidance. Evidently, we feel His response: an all potent Inner Force that listens to our prayers and fulfils our wish the moment we are a little sincere and faithful.

As for the devotee he resigns himself to God, surrendering his ego at His feet; he forgets all about the world and thinks of nothing else but God alone who would surely save him, and who alone is able to help and guide him. He communes his will with God's and acts as per His guidance. There is no sense of individuality or doership in him: he knows God's Will is his will, and must act up to it. Does that mean that he is shorn of Purushartha? Certainly not. For, he negates himself and resigns to the Lord; to him flows the divine grace instantly; his nature is

divinised; and so, he naturally exerts himself in the right direction. Indeed, the very act of self-surrender is the Purushartha of the highest order.

Whereas, for a Vedantin, his prayer is essentially the prayer to the Self within—to Himself—to the cosmic consciousness that is immanent in all. At his initial stage, he considers his prayer as a sort of desire—either earthly or spiritual, either with motive or without motive. Then, when he sufficiently advances in his Sadhana, he considers his (so-called) desire as his will which finally opens his intuitive spiritual sight and becomes one with the Cosmic Will. H.P. Blavatsky views prayer as such.

According to Ghazali, the Muslim mystic, prayer has three stages: verbal, mental and when merging with the Lord's Will. At the first stage, the devotee sings the glory of God, chants His praise and pours out his anguish of heart in melodious hymns. Secondly when the mind becomes calm, when the outgoing senses have been restrained by sustained practices, when the mind cannot be easily affected by the evil influences, prayer becomes mental: there no physical effort is needed. At the third stage, when the mind gets concentrated in the Divine when it loses its outward attractions and becomes serene, devoid of desires or cravings, the prayer becomes automatic, natural and habitual: it reaches its highest stage. The Lord's Will becomes his own will. For, God who is invoked by his prayer, merges in his mind—in his will; there is no self-consciousness for him, he abides in the Lord, his mind being entirely saturated with Him: he perceives nothing external, nor anything internal; he even forgets that he is praying to the Lord, that he is absorbed in the Lord's Will—a vague sense of duality. But he has only one experience—his oneness with the Lord.

Prayer is full of emotions: deep, serene emotions, marrowed with sincerity. But when it is more of an emotional, natural than of an actual sincerity, it becomes rather

jejunical, and therefore, ineffective. It is here we do not receive direct response from God. Prayer has its consequences—the nature of its response mainly depending upon the inner nature of the person who prays, his temperament and his object in view, his requirements, and his faith and sincerity—the *sine qua non* of prayer.

Sometimes our main object of prayer becomes selfish, grossly earthly, unreasonable and irrational. We crave for our selfish ends, for the fulfilment of our material desires. At times, we even venture to pray to meet our evil wish. It is here we experience its negative consequence. Essentially, prayer should be selfless as far as possible. We should first pray for the good of others, for welfare and peace of the world and for our own spiritual evolution; we should pray for the eradication of our evil qualities, for wisdom and knowledge, for goodness and saintliness.

Asato Ma Sat Gamaya
Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya
Mrityor Ma Amritam Gamaya

"Lead me on from unreal to Real, from darkness to Light, from mortality to Immortality."

This is the best prayer; the prayer for the Light, for the Truth, for Immortality. The foremost prayer of an aspirant should be for the removal of his ignorance. His goal is to realise the Truth and to free himself from the meshes of those that are unreal. His goal is to realise his essential divine nature.

At times even sincere prayer is not responded to. This however, should never be allowed to mar our faith or sincerity or to discourage and depress us; but should be considered as a necessity, to test our sincerity, our serenity and faith in God. At times this irresponse is often repeated. The devotee gets bewildered; he begins to lose his faith in God; and sometimes he is diverted from the Path. Indeed, it is here that we have to show our patience, our steadfast-

ness and faith in His grace. Often God tests us with severest trials. But does it mean that He is unkind—He does not wish to pay heed to our prayers? Obviously not. It is only a test, which the aspirant must pass through. His faith may not be strong enough; his dross of mind might not have been cleaned yet; his heart might not have become pure yet. How can he strengthen his faith? How can he cleanse the dross of his mind and purify his heart? It is only through tests, trials and tribulations. Just as gold is purified by passing it through the crucible several times, so also the heart must become pure, the faith must become unflinching, by passing through the crucible of trials again and again. But at the ultimate end, all prayers are fulfilled and gratified with the highest fulfilment. Therefore when we pray to God or wish to receive grace from Him, we must be prepared to accept joyfully his irresponse and even trials and tribulations.

Prayer cleanses the dross and steadies the mind. It washes off the impurities of the heart with the pure waters of spiritual emotions, corrects the defects and shortcomings and prepares the mind for the reception of Self-knowledge. In times of danger and calamity, mass prayer works wonders. Prayer for the departed souls bestows peace on them.

Prayer is as real as the force of gravity. It can reach a realm where reason is too feeble to enter. It can work miracles. Its magnanimous efficacy is indescribable. Its potency can be hardly comprehended without actual experience.

FAITH AND ASPIRATION

Faith is Sraddha. Faith is the greatest thing in the world. Even the highest rationality has faith as its background. One cannot ratiocinate on things in which he has no faith. Even the greatest philosopher has faith as his stronghold. No intellectualism can prove good if it is not supported by faith. The whole world stands on faith and is

guided by faith. Religion has faith as its root. One cannot prove God if he has no faith in God. God is only a matter of faith. This faith is the outcome of previous Samskaras. Certain men are born-philosophers and certain others do not grasp the fundamentals of religion even at the age of seventy. This is all due to past Samskaras or impressions. Faith is guided by impressions of actions done in the previous births and the present faith is nearer or farther from the Truth in accordance with the advancement made in spiritual evolution.

Blind faith should be turned into rational faith. Faith without understanding is blind faith. Bhakti is the development of faith. Jnana is the development of Bhakti. Faith leads to Final Experience. Whatever a person strongly believes in that he experiences, and that he becomes. The whole world is a product of faithful imagination. If you have no faith in the world, the world does not exist. If you have no faith in sensual objects, they will not give you pleasure. If you have no faith in God, you never reach perfection. Wrong faith turns even existence into non-existence. "One who thinks that Brahman does not exist, himself becomes non-existent," says the Taittiriyopanishad. Faith is the fundamental necessity for spiritual Sadhana.

Aspiration is a development of faith. It is one step ahead of faith. The flame of faith burns as the conflagration of spiritual aspiration for Moksha. The aspirant yearns to have divine experience. It is no more mere faith but strong feeling which cannot be easily shaken by external events. The devotee longs to have union with the Beloved. He has no sleep, no rest. He always contemplates on how to attain the object of his love. He prays, sings, and gets mad of his Lord. Divine madness overtakes the devotee and he completely loses his personality in the aspiration for attaining God. This is called self-surrender.

FOUR KINDS OF BHAKTAS

Bhaktas or devotees of God are of four types. Arta, Jijnasu, Artharthi and Jnani. Arta is the distressed devotee who is suffering very much and who craves for the grace of God, in order to get himself relieved from pain and sorrow, Jijnasu is the seeker after knowledge, who feels that he is ignorant, and who wants the grace of God in order to have Wisdom. Artharthi is the seeker of wealth, who longs for earthly possessions, money, land, etc., in order to enjoy a happy life, and who propitiates God to get His grace to amass wealth. Jnani is the wise, the sage who is satisfied with the Self, who is contented in the Self, who has no desires, who is freed from desires, who has fulfilled all desires, whose only desire is the Self; who considers his own Self as the All-inclusive God.

The distressed is he who is suffering from a chronic incurable disease, whose life is in jeopardy on account of earthquake, volcanic eruption, thunder, attack by a dacoit or enemy, tiger etc. Draupadi and Gajendra are examples of Arta-Bhaktas. When Dussasana dragged her before the court of the Kauravas and pulled her sari, Draupadi cried for Krishna in order to guard her respect. Gajendra called on Narayana when a crocodile was dragging him in water.

Jijnasu is the enquirer. He is dissatisfied with the world. There is a void in his life. He always feels that sensual pleasure is not the highest form of happiness and there is yet pure eternal bliss unmixed with grief and pain, which is to be found within. Uddhava was a Jijnasu. He was dissatisfied with the world and got wisdom from Sri Krishna. This is recorded in the Bhagavata.

The seeker after wealth craves for money, wife, children, position, name and fame. Sugriva and Dhruva were Artharthi-Bhaktas. Sugriva wanted to drive away Vali and get his kingdom. Vibhishana wanted to put an end to Ravana and get Lanka. Dhruva wanted a kingdom where his step mother would not trouble and ill-treat him.

The Jnani is a man of knowledge who has attained Self-illumination. Suka-Maharshi was a Jnani-Bhakta. He was a Brahma-Jnani of the highest type. He realised that everything was his own Self. He taught the Srimad-Bhagavata to Parikshit.

There is another type of Bhaktas, called Vaira Bhaktas. These Bhaktas are negative Bhaktas. They do not have positive devotion for God. They hate God and thus remember Him always. Hatred also requires a constant remembrance of the enemy. So these also are a kind of Bhaktas only. They attain salvation through Vaira-Bhakti. Kamsa, Sisupala and others thought of the Lord constantly on account of their deep hatred for Him. Thus they attained Salvation.

NAVA-VIDHA BHAKTI

INTRODUCTORY

Devotion to God is developed in nine different ways. It is supreme attachment to God through a Bhava predominant in the devotee. Intense love is the common factor in all the nine modes. Exclusive love for God is expressed through various methods. All Bhaktas of this type are above the formalities of the world. They are untouched by the laws of human Dharma and are out and out concerned with God. In illustration of this, the following verse runs:

Vyadhasyacharanam dhruvasya cha
vayo vidya gajendrasya ka,
Ka jatir-vidurasya yadavapater-
ugrasya kim paurusham;
Kubjayah kamaneeyarupam-adhikam
kim tat-sudamno dhanam;
Bhaktya tushyati kevalam na tu gunai
bhaktapriyo madhavah.

"What was the conduct of the fowler (Dharma-Vyadha)? What was the age of Dhruva? What was the learning possessed by Gajendra? What was the caste of

Vidura? What was the effort done by Ugrasena? What was the bodily beauty of Kubja? What was the wealth of Sudama? Lord Madhava is satisfied only with intense Devotion (Bhakti), and not with other qualities possessed by persons."

The fowler was a killer of animals. Dhruva was a boy of five years. Gajendra was an elephant devoid of scholarship. Vidura was a Sudra by caste. Ugrasena did no self-effort but simply sat without doing anything. Kubja was a very ugly woman with hunch-back. Sudama was one of the poorest of men. But the Lord did not consider these defects of His devotees. He took only their devotion and sent His blessings upon them all.

Good conduct which is in accordance with perfect moral law is an auxiliary to pure Bhakti and it follows the true Bhakta wherever he goes. One cannot develop true devotion to God if he is crooked in heart, if he has got objects of love in this world, if he is tempted by charming worldly things, if he wishes to take care of his wife, children and relatives, if he wishes to feed his body well, if he wishes to earn a great name in the world, if he wants to establish a permanent fame on earth, if he does not like to part with the alluring contents of the world. Perfect detachment from all objects is a preliminary to real devotion. Vairagya is the product of real love for God. One who has love for the world cannot have love for God. Where there is Kama, there cannot be Rama and where there is Rama there cannot be Kama. Love for the world and love for God are diametrically opposite things. One has to be renounced for the attainment of the other. This renunciation can be acquired through the nine forms of Bhakti.

In the Srimad-Bhagavata and the Vishnu Purana it is told that the nine forms of Bhakti are Sravana (hearing of God's Lila's and stories), Kirtana (singing of His glories), Smarana (remembrance of His Name and presence),

Padasevana (service of His feet), Archana (worship of God), Vandana (prostration to the Lord), Dasya (cultivating the Bhava of a servant with God), Sakhya (cultivation of the friend-Bhava), and Atma-nivedana (complete surrender of the self).

Sravanam kirtanam vishnoh smaranam padasevanam;
Archanam vandanam dasyam sakhyam-atmanivedanam.

A devotee can practise any method of Bhakti which suits him best. Through that he will attain Divine illumination.

SRAVANA

Sravana is hearing of Lord's Lilas. Sravana includes hearing of God's virtues, glories, sports and stories connected with His divine Name and Form. The devotee gets absorbed in the hearing of Divine stories and his mind merges in the thought of divinity; it cannot think of undivine things, The mind loses, as it were, its charm for the world. The devotee remembers God only even in dream.

The devotee should sit before a learned Teacher who is a great saint and hear Divine stories. He should hear them with a sincere heart devoid of the sense of criticism or fault-finding. The devotee should try his best to live in the ideals preached in the scriptures. Lord Krishna says in the Gita:

Tadviddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya;
Upadekshyanti te jnanam jnaninah-tattvadarsinah.

"Know That by long prostration, by service and enquiry. The wise who know the Truth shall instruct thee in that wisdom."

One cannot attain Sravana-Bhakti without the company of the saints or wise men. Mere reading for oneself is not of much use. Doubts will crop up. They cannot be solved by one's own self very easily. An experienced man is necessary to instruct the devotee in the right path. Sankaracharya says: *"Kshanamapi sajjana sangatireka bhavati bhavarnava tarane nauka"*—"The company of the

wise, even for a moment, becomes the boat to cross across the ocean of Samsara." Without Satsanga Sadhana does not become perfect and strong. The fort of Sadhana should be built on the foundation of Satsanga. Mere austerities are not the end of Sadhana. Satsanga illumines the devotee and removes his impurities. It is only then that subtle truths are grasped well by the devotee. Lord Krishna says to Uddhava that nothing but Satsanga alone can put an end to all worldly attachments. In the Bhagavata-Mahatmya it is told that the best Dharma in this world is to hear Lord's glories. For, thereby, one attains to the Divine Abode.

King Parikshit attained Liberation through Sravana. He heard the glories of God from Suka-Maharshi. His heart was purified. He attained the abode of Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha. He became liberated and enjoyed supreme Bliss.

KIRTANA

Kirtana is singing of Lord's glories. The devotee is thrilled with Divine Emotion. He loses himself in the love of God. He gets horripilation in the body due to extreme love for God. He weeps in the middle when thinking of the glory of God. His voice becomes choked and he flies into a state of divine Bhavana. The devotee is ever engaged in Japa of the Lord's Name and in describing His glories to one and all. Wherever he goes he begins to sing and praise God. He requests all to join his Kirtana. He sings and dances in ecstasy. He makes others also dance.

Such practices should be the outcome of a pure heart, and they should not be merely a show. God knows the inner secret of all and none can cheat Him. There should be perfect straightforwardness and all his actions should be the natural outpouring from the heart. This is the easiest of all modes of approach to God. In Kali Yuga, iron age, Kirtana alone is the best Yoga. 'Kalau Kesava Kirtanam.' This is the prescribed method of devotion for this age. The mind is ever intent upon singing Lord's Names and glories and it has no occasion to take interest in things of the

world. Day and night the devotee feels the presence of God and thins out his ego. He becomes Sattvic and pure at heart.

Great divine persons like Narada, Valmiki, Sukadeva, in ancient times, Gouranga, Nanak, Tulsidas, Surdas, etc., in comparatively recent times, have all attained perfection through Kirtana Bhakti alone. Even the great sinner Ajamila crossed the ocean of Samsara by repetition of Lord's Name. Japa and Kirtana are the most potent methods of realising God in this Kali Yuga. If even sinners can cross this Maya through devotion to God, what to speak of good persons who have a pure heart, who have served their Guru, and the country, and who are nearer to God than sinners?

Kirtana is a very effective method of devotion for another reason. Man is an erotic being. He loves and loves. He cannot but love things of the world. But his love is only passion and is not pure divine love. He wants to hear sweet music, wants to see beautiful objects, and wants to witness a dance. Music melts the heart of even the stone-hearted man. If at all there is anything in this world which can change the heart of a man in a very quick time, that is music and dance. This very method is made use of in Kirtana-Bhakti, but it is directed towards God instead of towards sensual enjoyments. Man's emotion of erotism is directed towards Divinity and his love for music and singing is not destroyed; because sudden destruction of such a sentiment which he holds as very dear will not prove successful in making him perfect. Kirtana is sweet and pleasant and easily changes the heart. Suka-Maharshi is an example of a Kirtana-Bhakta. He told the Srimad-Bhagavata to Parikshit. He was fully in the state of Bhava-Samadhi at the time of reciting the Bhagavata. It is told in the Bhagavata Mahatmya that, when Sri Suka was singing the glories of the Lord, the Devas themselves came down from heaven and took part in the Kirtana with various

musical instruments. Narada played his Vina and Indra played the Mridanga. Prahlada danced with his cymbals and Lord Siva Himself began His Nritya. Lord Vishnu was present. All those assembled there were thrilled by the occasional dance of Sri Suka himself. Kirtana is the most suitable method even for householders. This gives pleasure to the mind and at the same time purifies the heart. This has double effect. Kirtana is, perhaps, the best method suited for all people without distinction.

SMARANA

Smarana is remembrance of the Lord at all times. This is unbroken memory of the Name and Form of the Lord. The mind does not think of any object of the world, but is ever engrossed in thinking of the glories of the Lord alone. The mind meditates on what is heard about the glories of God and His virtues, Names etc., and forgets even the body and contents itself in the remembrance of God, just as Dhruva and Prahlada did. Even Japa is only remembrance of God and comes under the category of this Bhakti. Remembrance also includes hearing of stories pertaining to God at all times, talking of God, teaching to others what pertains to God, meditation on the attributes of God, etc. Remembrance has no particular time. God is to be remembered at all times without break, so long as one has got his consciousness intact. Right up from his getting up from sleep in the morning, until he is completely overpowered by sleep in the night, a person is to remember God. He has no other duty in this world except remembrance of God. Remembrance of God alone can destroy all worldly Samskaras. Remembrance of God alone can turn away the mind from sense-objects. Generally the mind runs extrovert. But remembrance of God makes it introvert and does not allow it to run to particular objects of the world. Remembrance of God is a very difficult method of Sadhana. It is not possible to remember God at all times. The mind will cheat the person. He will think that he is

meditating on God, but actually he will be dreaming of some object of the world or something connected with the name and fame. Remembrance is equal to concentration or meditation. All the qualities which a Raja-Yogin prescribes for the practice of meditation should be acquired by a Bhakta who wants to practise Smarana-Bhakti. Smarana is swimming against the forceful current of the river of Maya. Smarana leads to exclusive meditation on God, as is done in Raja-Yoga.

Company of real devotees is another auxiliary in the remembrance of God. Service of Mahatmas is still another necessity. The mind cannot but remember divine things when it is in the company of divine people. Therefore one should have Satsanga and he should always live with a saint or a great Bhakta. He should not be perturbed by censure or ridicule from the world. He should rely on God and rest assured that God will help him in all troubles and He will give him Final Emancipation.

Lord Krishna says in the Gita: "O Arjuna! He who fixing his mind on Me, constantly remembers Me, I am easily attained by that Yogi, ever united with Me." The Gita is an authority on the nine modes of Bhakti. Lord Krishna illustrates with authority that the various modes of devotion shall lead one to the Supreme.

Remembrance of the Lord has given Liberation even to those who remembered Him through hatred, even as a worm, through meditation on the wasp through hatred and fear, attains the state of the wasp. Haters of the Lord like Kamsa and Sisupala had attained the state of Moksha through Vaira-Bhakti. Constant remembrance is the fruit of almost all other methods of practice in spiritual Sadhana. This is the most potent method and the most difficult also.

The miser does not forget his wealth even if he is engaged in other duties. The lustful man does not forget his beloved, and the cow does not forget its calf even while grazing. Even so a worldly man, even though he

may be engaged in other duties of life, should practise the remembrance of God.

Prahlada practised the remembrance of God. He never forgot God at any time. He was punished by his cruel father in all possible ways. But the devoted Prahlada crossed over all troubles and obtained the Supreme Grace of the Lord. Prahlada was lost in the consciousness of God. Such should be the ardent aspiration of all devotees. The seventh Skandha of the Bhagavata gives a beautiful description of how Prahlada practised Bhakti even amidst trying conditions.

PADASEVANA

Padasevana is serving the Lord's feet. Actually this can be done only by Lakshmi or Parvati. No mortal being has got the fortune to practise this method of Bhakti for the Lord is not visible to the physical eyes. But it is possible to serve the image of God in idols and better still, taking the whole humanity as God. This is Padasevana. Padasevana is service of the sick. Padasevana is service of the poor. Padasevana is service of the whole humanity at large. The whole universe is only Virat-Svarupa. Service of the world is service of the Lord.

Service of the Lord's feet can be done through formal worship to Murtis or idols in temples or to a mental image of God.

Observing the sacred feet of the Lord again and again with devotional and eager eyes, worshipping them and serving them, sipping the sacred water with which the Lord's feet have been washed, worshipping the wooden sandals of the Lord, meditating on them and praying to them, taking the dust of the Lord's feet and applying it to the forehead, washing the heart with the dust of the Lord's feet, respecting the holy shrines and places of pilgrimage, and places where God incarnated Himself for the good of humanity, regarding the Ganga as directly flowing from the

feet of the Lord, worshipping, bathing in and drinking of such divine water of the Ganga—all these are different forms of serving the Lord's feet. This kind of devotion destroys all worldly attachments and allows the mind to exclusively think of God.

Bharata served the sandals of the feet of Sri Rama. What a great devotion! He kept them on the throne and worshipped them as representing Sri Rama Himself. He ruled the kingdom in the name of Sri Rama's sandals, himself acting as only the servant of Rama. This is Padasevana Bhakti. Ahalya felt her life fulfilled, having obtained the dust of Lord's feet. Srimad-Bhagavata says: "He who has taken shelter in the feet of the Lord, which is the refuge of saints and full of blessedness, for him the ocean of worldly existence becomes as shallow as the hoof-mark of a calf. The Supreme State is already attained by him. Worldly miseries and difficulties do not appear before him."

Sri Lakshmidevi is enjoying this practice of devotion and she is ever serving the feet of Lord Hari. Lord Vishnu is resting His feet on the lap of Sri Lakshmidevi and she is the example of one engaged in Padasevana-Bhakti.

ARCHANA

Archana is worship of the Lord. "Those who perform the worship of Vishnu in this world, attain the immortal and blissful state of Moksha," thus says the Vishnu-Rahasya. Worship can be done either through an image or a picture or even a mental form. The image should be one appealing to the mind of the worshipper.

Worship can be done either with external materials or merely through an interior Bhava or strong feeling. The latter one is an advanced form of worship which only men of purified intellect can do. Worship should be done according to the rules laid down in the Varnashrama-Dharma or in the case of advanced devotees worship can be done in any manner they like. The purpose of worship is to

please the Lord, to purify the heart through surrender of the ego and love of God.

Serving the poor people and worshipping saints is also worship of the Virat-Svarupa of the Lord. The Lord appears in all forms. He is everything. The scriptures declare that the Lord alone appears as the sentient and the insentient beings. The devotee should have Narayana-Bhava or Isvara-Bhava in all beings. He should consider all creatures, down even to the worm, as merely God. This is the highest form of worship.

Worship is generally done through the Tantrik or the Vaidika method. It can be done either in a temple or in one's own house, or even at any place outside. The object of worship is sincere devotion and real surrender for the sake of union with the Lord.

During worship the mind of the devotee should always be concentrated on the form of the Lord. It should think of His attributes, His Infinite Nature, Bliss, Immortality, etc. It should not think of earthly things.

The Bhog offered to the Lord during worship is actually taken away by Him when it is offered with sincere feeling. There are cases where devotees with burning love for God offered food to God and God actually appeared before them in His Supreme form and partook of the food offered to Him. These are rare cases, but it must be known that true devotees are very rare in this world.

Devotees like Prithu and Ambarisha practised this kind of Bhakti, i.e., Archana or worship of the Lord. Their stories are found in the Srimad-Bhagavata. The Lord appeared before Prithu, the first king of the world, and gave him His blessings. The Lord protected Ambarisha and gave him Emancipation. They were immersed in the love of God and they wanted nothing but God. They did not crave for worldly things from God but wanted only His grace. They wanted to please God and serve God. Nothing else

did they want. Such should be the devotion of all Bhaktas of selfless motive.

Offerings to God need not necessarily be rich and costly things. What did the lord of elephants (Gajendra) offer? Only a flower from the tank. Draupadi offered a vegetable leaf and Sabari some wild plums. But the Lord was pleased. It is the feeling of love for God that God takes into account and not the material that is offered. He is pleased even with leaves and mere water.

VANDANA

Vandana is prayer and prostration. Humble prostration touching the earth with the eight limbs of the body (Sashtanga-Namaskara), with faith and reverence, before a form of God, or prostrations to all beings knowing them to be the forms of the One God, and getting absorbed in the Divine Love of the Lord is termed prostration to God. The Bhagavata says: "The sky, air, fire, water, earth, stars, planets, the cardinal points (directions), trees, rivers, seas and all living beings constitute the body of Sri Hari. The devotee should bow before everything in absolute devotion, thinking that he is bowing before God Himself." Lord Krishna says to Uddhava: "Giving no attention to those who laugh in ridicule, forgetting the body and insensible to shame, one should prostrate and bow down to all beings, even to the dog, the ass, the Chandala and the cow. All is Myself, and nothing is but Myself."

Arjuna does prostration to Krishna in a most beautiful manner: "Salutation to You from the front, salutation to You from behind, salutation to You from every side! O All! Immeasurable in strength, You pervade all. You are all!"

The object or purpose of Devotion is to realise God through exclusive love. The Mahabharata says: "There is nothing which is more auspicious than Bhagavan Vasudeva, there is nothing more purifying than Vasudeva, and there is no Deva, worthy of being worshipped higher than

Vasudeva. He who offers his salutations to Vasudeva suffers no afflictions."

Bhishma says: "Even one bend of the head to Lord Sri Krishna is equal in merit to the completion of ten horse-sacrifices. The latter does not bring about Liberation, but the former makes one God Himself."

Akrura practised this kind of Bhakti, i.e., Vandana Bhakti. His story is given in the Srimad-Bhagavata. The Bhagavata says: "Overwhelmed with devout love, Akrura quickly jumped down from the chariot and fell prostrate like a pole at the feet of Balarama and Sri Krishna." In the Mahabharata it is told that the old warrior Bhishma offered his salutation to the Lord in a voice choked with deep emotion and Sri Krishna immediately favoured him with the light of Divine Knowledge, "Having thus offered his prayer to the Lord, Bhishma whose mind was wholly absorbed in God, said, 'Salutation to Krishna' and bowed his head to Him. Learning the depth of Bhishma's devotion, through His power of Yoga, Sri Hari, Madhava, bestowed upon Bhishma the light of Divine Knowledge which illuminates the three worlds."

The ego or Ahamkara is effaced out completely through devout prayer and prostration to God. The Divine grace descends upon the devotee and man becomes God.

DASYA

Dasya Bhakti is the love of God through servant-sentiment. To serve God and carry out His wishes, realising His virtues, nature, mystery and glory, considering oneself as a slave of God, the Supreme Master, is Dasya Bhakti.

Serving and worshipping the Murtis in temples, sweeping the temples, meditating on God and mentally serving Him like a slave, serving the saints and the sages, serving the devotees of God, serving poor and sick people who are forms of God, is also included in Dasya Bhakti.

To follow the words of scriptures, to act according to the injunctions of the Vedas, considering them to be direct words of God, is Dasya Bhakti. Association with and service of love-intoxicated devotees and service of those who have knowledge of God is Dasya Bhakti. The purpose behind Dasya Bhakti is to be ever with God in order to offer services to Him and win His Divine Grace and attain thereby immortality.

Arjuna prays with a sentiment of a slave, a servant and a disciple, in order to get the grace of Lord Krishna. "O Lord! I am Your disciple. I have taken refuge in You. Teach me." This should be the Bhava of a Bhakta. He should completely give himself up to God and should not retain any personal reservations with him. Ananya-Bhakti is total relinquishment of the self to God.

Lakshmana, Hanuman, Angada, etc., cultivated this Dasya-Bhava of Bhagavad-Bhakti. Lakshmana could not even speak to Rama at times in his extreme love for Rama and the humiliation of his self before Rama. Hanuman is a towering example of Divine Seva to the Lord. He spent his whole life in serving Lord Rama. Angada did not want to leave Rama even at the latter's request and prayed to Lord Rama that he would serve Him at all times, that he would do even the most menial of services for the sake of Lord Rama. These devotees were of an exceptional type and it is very difficult to develop such a Bhakti as was possessed by Hanuman, Lakshmana or Angada. The heart has to be purified, the mind has to be thinned out, desires have to be annihilated. It is then that the devotee feels his real Love for God. Before such a purification, the love of God becomes coloured with earthliness and does not bear the expected fruit. Total surrender is the ideal of Dasya Bhakti. The Dasa or the servant loses nothing but gains everything through the service of God either in His Transcendental or His Immanent aspect.

SAKHYA

Sakhya-Bhava is the cultivation of the friend-sentiment with God. The inmates of the family of Nandagopa cultivated this Bhakti. Arjuna cultivated this kind of Bhakti. The Bhagavata says: "Oh, how wonderful is the fortune of the people of Vraja of cowherd Nanda whose dear friend is the perfect, eternal Brahman of Absolute Bliss!"

To be always with the Lord, to treat Him as one's own dear relative or a friend belonging to one's own family, to be in His company at all times, to love Him as one's own Self, is Sakhya-Bhava of Bhakti-Marga. The devotee of Sakhya-Bhava takes up with eagerness any work of the Lord leaving aside even the most important and urgent and pressing work, assuming an attitude of neglect towards personal work, and totally concerning himself with the love of the Lord. How do friends, real friends love in this world? What an amount of love they possess between one another? Such a love is developed towards God instead of towards man. Physical love is turned into spiritual love. There is a transformation of the mundane into the Eternal.

The devotee considers all his actions as merely nothing, though he has done really a superhuman act. He always does what may please God in all respects. He considers all as God. He treats every being of the world as his own relative or friend. He treats everyone as belonging to himself. There is no selfishness, no hatred, no separateness in him. He becomes one with all in feeling. He loves all, for all are his friends. All is God. And God is the Supreme Friend of his. He is always satisfied with what is ordained by God. He is supremely joyful if anything of his own comes to the service of God. He feels that God has similar powers over his belongings as he has got himself. He moves with God and treats God as not a dignified, terrifying, hard task master, but a friend, sweet and loving. He longs to see God. He does not want to leave the Lord even for a moment. He says, "My Lord! My Beloved!

How can I live without Thee? My Dear! Where are You?" and loses himself in the Love of his Beloved. He considers that his existence and the existence of what belongs to him is fruitful only if it is useful in the service of God, for he cannot live without God. To live without God is an impossibility. God is the innermost and the dearest of friends. All friends may desert a person, but God will never desert His devotees. He loves you even if you do not love Him. The devotee feels himself merged in the ocean of joy on seeing, touching or thinking of the Beloved. Mere hearing of His Name kindles the devotee's love for God. He jumps and sings in ecstasy. He is overwhelmed with joy when anybody brings a message of the Beloved. He feels anguish at his separation from the Beloved. He is ever expecting to meet his Beloved. These are some of the characteristics of a Bhakta who follows the Sakhya-Bhava.

Vibhishana, Sugriva, Uddhava, Arjuna, Sudama, Sridama and the playmates of the Lord in Vraja are the examples of devotees who cultivated the friend-sentiment of Bhakti.

ATMA-NIVEDANA

Atma-Nivedana is self-surrender. In Vishnu-Sahasranama it is said: "The heart of one who has taken refuge in Vasudeva, who is wholly devoted to Vasudeva, gets entirely purified, and he attains Brahman, the Eternal."

The devotee offers everything to God, including his body, mind and soul. He keeps nothing for himself. He loses even his own self. He has no personal and independent existence. He has given up himself for God. He has become part and parcel of God. God takes care of him and God treats him as Himself. Grief and sorrow, pleasure and pain, the devotee treats as gifts sent by God and does not attach himself to them. He considers himself as a puppet of God and as an instrument in the hands of God. He does not feel egoistic, for he has no ego. His ego has gone over to God. It is not his duty to take care of his wife,

children etc., for he himself has no independent existence apart from God. God will take care of all. He knows how to lead the world in the right path. One need not think that he is born to lead the world. God is there who will look to everything which man cannot even dream of. He has no sensual craving, for he has no body as it is offered to God. He does not love or adore his body for it is God's business to see to it. He only feels the presence of God and nothing else. He is fearless, for God is helping him at all times. He has no enemy for he has given himself up to God who has no enemies or friends. He has no anxiety for he has attained everything by attaining the grace of God. He has not even the thought of salvation; rather he does not want salvation even, he merely wants God and nothing but God. He is satisfied with the love of God for by that there is nothing that is not attained. What is there to be attained, when God has sent His grace upon the devotee? The devotee does not want to become sugar but taste sugar. There is pleasure in tasting sugar, but not in becoming sugar itself. So the devotee feels that there is supreme joy more in loving God than becoming God. God shall take complete care of the devotee. "I am Thine," says the devotee.

This self-surrender is Absolute Love for God exclusively. There is nothing but God-consciousness in the devotee. Even against his own wishes, the devotee shall become one with God and lose his individuality. This is the law of being. The Highest Truth is Absoluteness and the soul rises above through different states of consciousness until it attains Absolute Perfection when it becomes identical with God. This is the culmination of all aspiration and love.

There are innumerable verses in the Bhagavadgita and the Bhagavata establishing the truth that self-surrender is the only way to attain the Supreme. Krishna teaches

Arjuna that self-surrender, total and exclusive, alone can give him peace and relieve him from all sins.

One who studies the Bhagavadgita and the Srimad-Bhagavata will come to know what great importance is stressed upon total self-surrender. For self-surrender is the annihilation of individual consciousness and the attainment of Absolute Consciousness. This is equal to Nirvikalpa-Samadhi or Brahma-Sakshatkara. The devotee flies to the state of the highest Mahabhava and merges himself in God. The wave subsides in the ocean. The spark becomes one with fire. The ray is absorbed into the sun. The mind merges in the Atman. The individual loses himself in the Absolute. The devotee becomes one with God. Worldly consciousness vanishes into Universal Consciousness. Man becomes God and the mortal becomes Immortal.

Whatever belongs to God becomes the belonging of the highest devotee. All his sins are destroyed. He has no duties to perform. He is mere Apta-Kama or perfected soul. He is the most blessed. To him the whole world appears as mere Bliss. There is only the manifestation of Supreme Love.

The Gopis and Bali Chakravarti practised this love. The Gopis lost themselves in Krishna. Bali, the king, offered his self to the Lord. The Gopis lost themselves in God-consciousness and attained the Supreme.

CONCLUSION

The nine modes of Bhakti are the ways in which a devotee attains the Supreme Ideal of Life. Any devotee can take up any of these paths and reach the highest state. The path of Bhakti is the easiest of all and is not very much against the nature of the human inclinations. It slowly and gradually takes the individual to the Supreme without frustrating his human instincts. It follows the Arundhatee Nyaya or the Shakhachandra Nyaya of logic instead of the

Bhramara-Keetaka Nyaya of the Vedantins. It is not direct assertion of God, but a progressive realisation of Him.

NAVA-VIDHA BHAKTI ACCORDING TO RAMACHARITAMANAS OF GOSWAMI TULASIDASJI

Lord Rama gives the following as the Nine Modes of Devotion, when He meets Shabari, the Bilni woman:

First is the society of realised saints.

Second is the recitation of the Lord's glories.

The third is devotional service to God.

The fourth is Guna-Gana or a faithful and devoted singing of His Divine Qualities.

The fifth is Japa or repetition of His Name with firm faith, according to the Vedas.

The sixth is strict self-discipline through the practice of perfect withdrawal of the senses and the mind from worldly activities. This is the duty of the good, in all circumstances.

The seventh is the practice of perceiving the whole world in the Lord and of regarding the saints as more venerable than the Lord Himself. It is visualising the macrocosm in the microcosm.

The eighth is contentment and cheer in whatever one gets and never finding faults in others.

The ninth is to deal without trick or fraud with one and all, to depend upon Him and to be indifferent to pleasure and pain.

Whoever practises any one of these nine, be he a man or a woman, or an animate or inanimate creature, is most dear to Him.

BHAVA AND RASA IN BHAKTI

RAGATMIKA BHAKTI

I offer my humble prostrations to the all-illuminating, blissful, lotus feet of Lord Krishna, the Lord of the three

worlds, the joy of Devaki, the flute bearer of Vrindavan, the beloved of Radha, Rukmini, Satyabhama and the Gopis.

Bhakti full of Raga is called Ragatmika. Whoever cultivates Ragatmika Bhakti develops Preeti or sprout of Prema to Lord Krishna's feet. He who cultivates it is called Raga-anuraga. The embryo of Prema has two names viz., Rati and Bhava which enthral Krishna. One attains the wealth of Krishna Prema Rasa from Rati and Bhava.

A passionate longing or extreme thirst or Raga for the object of desire or adored object is the Svarupa (characteristic or sign) of Ragatmika Bhakti. Absorption in the object of desire is its Tatastha sign or feature.

The Ragatmika Bhakti is chiefly found in the people of Vrindavan or Brajavasins. A Ragatmika or Raganuraga Bhakta pays no heed to Sastric reasoning.

The Ragatmika Bhakti is cultivated in two ways, external and internal. Externally the devotee chants and hears Lord's Name and praises. Internally in his mind he imagines himself to be identical with his ideal such as any Sakhi or cowherd mate of Sri Krishna and thus serves Lord Krishna at Vrindavan day and night in fancy. He imagines himself as having a Siddha (perfect) form like his ideal and in this imaginary form serves Sri Krishna in Braja day and night in fancy. He withdraws himself into his own mind and remains very near to his object of adoration, beloved Krishna, and thus serves Him constantly.

He takes Lord Krishna as Master, friend, child or the sweetheart (beloved). The devotee conquers the Lord through Rati and Bhava and gets the treasure of Love for Sri Krishna.

RATI OR BHAVA AND RASA

Rasa of the philosophy of love is liquid mellowness. The devotee who has developed the Madhurya Bhava tastes the liquid mellowness of the nectarian pastimes and attributes of the soul-thrilling forms and names of Sri

Radha-Krishna. The relish of permanent joy that characterises the divine ecstatic state of the devotee is known as Rasa. The Upanishad declares "Verily He is Rasa." Lord Krishna is an embodiment of Rasa. He is Akhilarasamrita Murti, the repository of all Rasa or bliss. He is the fountain source of Rasa.

The whole Bhagavata is an elaboration of this very concept of Rasa. Rasa is a divine emotional state. Rasa is an eternal, indivisible and inconceivable essence of the supreme transcendental bliss. Bhava is the main basis of Rasa.

When Rati (attachment begotten of Sadhana Bhakti for Lord Krishna) is deepened and intensified it is called Prema or Sthayi Bhava, permanent form of Bhakti Rasa.

Bhava is the name of that emotional state the essence of which is pure Sattva. It is compared to the rays of the rising sun. Bhava ushers in Prema just as the rays usher in the rising sun, and melts the heart by strong desire for attaining Lord Krishna. The essential purity of the soul and the softening of the mind are the Svarupa and the Tatastha signs of Bhava respectively.

When Rati for Bhava in its advanced stage softens the mind more markedly than in its initial stage, when it is deepened in intensity, when the devotee is intensely attached to Lord Krishna, it is called Prema.

If anyone has Sraddha (faith) he then takes recourse to the company of saints or Bhaktas. He commences the chanting and hearing of Lord Krishna's Name and praises. All evils or sins and obstacles to devotion are destroyed by this Sadhana of chanting and hearing. Nishtha (devoutness) arises when the evils are destroyed. From Nishtha, Ruchi or taste for hearing and chanting themes about Sri Krishna arises. From this taste arises a strong inclination for devotion. From this inclination sprouts out Rati for Krishna. Rati deepens into Prema.

STHAYI BHAVA, VIBHAVA

Sthayi Bhava is the mainstay of Rasa. Vibhava is that for which Rati etc., are felt, or in which Rati etc., repose, as well as that which awakens Rati etc. Vibhava is of two kinds, viz., Alambana and Uddipana.

Alambana is that in respect of which Rati is considered. It is of two kinds: (i) Vishaya Alambana, i.e., Lord Krishna Himself for whom Rati etc., are felt and (ii) Asraya Alambana, i.e., Krishna Bhaktas in whom Rati etc., dwell. These two by their presence inspire Rati.

Uddipana is that which awakens Rati for Sri Krishna owing to its association with Sri Krishna. Lord Krishna's qualities, deeds, His foot-marks, Tulasi etc. are called Uddipana or excitants.

SNEHA, MANA, PRANAYA, ETC.

Prema takes the form of Sneha, Mana, Pranaya, Raga, Anuraga, Bhava, Maha-Bhava, just as from sugar-cane juice we have molasses, black sugar, white sugar, sugar-candy etc.

When love (Prema) in its more concentrated form produces melting of the heart, it is called Sneha. When Sneha in its next higher stage of development assumes, in order to augment the sweetness of the enjoyment, an attitude of untowardness, not anger though it my be mistaken for it. It is then called Mana. Pranaya is love which makes the lover think himself at one with the beloved. When the devotee feels happiness even when he is put to suffering for the sake of the beloved one, it is called Raga. When he discovers ever new sweetness in the beloved, it is Anuraga. Bhava is permanent form of Bhakti-Rasa. The highest pitch or consummation of Bhava is Maha-bhava.

Rati, like the sugar-cane juice, as it grows purer and purer, becomes stage by stage, more and more delicious in relish and flavour. Rati is of five kinds viz., Santa Rati, Dasya Rati, Sakhya Rati, Vatsalya Rati and Madhura Rati.

These five permanent emotions (Bhavas) have five different flavours which delight the devotee and captivate Lord Krishna.

These Ratis or Sthayi Bhavas (permanent emotions of love) up to Maha-Bhava mixed with ingredients such as Vibhava and Anubhava, culminate in Krishna-Bhakti Rasa.

The permanent emotion (Sthayi Bhava) on being mingled with Rasa is changed into these four: Vibhava, Anubhava, Sattvika and Vyabhichari. Just as curd on being mixed with sugar, black pepper and camphor becomes a wonderfully delicious thing named Rasala, Sthayi Bhava Rasa matures with the mixture of Vibhava, Anubhava, Sattvika and Vyabhichari.

VYABHICHARI

Vyabhichari is of 33 kinds such as delight, rapture etc. Emotions exhibited by words and gestures are Vyabhichari. They are also called Sanchari Bhavas. They are Niveda (self-disparagement), Vishada (despondency), Dainya (abject humility), Glani (sorrow), Srama (exhaustion), Mada (arrogance), Garva (pride), Sanka (doubt), Trasa (fear), Avega (impulse), Unmada (raving), Apasmara (forgetfulness), Vyadhi (illness), Moha (loss of sensibility or consciousness), Mrityu (death), Alasya (idleness), Jadya (stupor), Vreeda (shyness), Akaragopani (cloaking one's own real bearings), Smriti (remembrance), Vitarka (wrong argument), Chinta (reflection), Mata (determination), Dhriti (calmness), Harsha (delight), Autsukya (solicitude), Ugrata (ferocity), Amarsha (impatience), Asuya (jealousy), Chapalata (fickleness), Nidra (sleep), Supti (sleepiness) and Bodha (waking or knowing).

Sthayi Bhava or Krishna Rati is the mainstay of Rasa. It is the master of 49 different Bhavas. It is the bliss potency of Lord Himself. It lies in a subtle unmanifested state within the individual soul. Vibhava is the cause or extension of Rasa. Anubhava is the effect of Rasa.

Stupefaction, horripilation and the like which constitute the Sattvic bhava are the specific effects of Rasa. Sanchari Bhava is support or auxiliary to Rasa. Vibhavas and Anubhavas are the outer things which help the manifestation of Rasa. The inner thing is the Bhava. Bhava thus is the main basis of Rasa.

The nature and essence of Bhava are pure Chitta. The mind of the devotee is reduced to a state of pure Chitta owing to the constant practice of devotion and the grace of the Lord.

The eight Sattvika Bhavas are Stambha (paralysis), Sveda (perspiration), Romancha (horripilation), Svarabhanga (hoarseness of voice), Vepathu (trembling), Vaivarnya (change of colour), Asru (tears) and Pralaya (loss of consciousness).

FIVE KINDS OF BHAVAS

INTRODUCTORY

Rasas are different kinds of feelings in Bhakti-Bhava. They are states of ecstasy which a devotee experiences in his height of devotion for God. This state is not a negative emptiness, but a positive state of bliss and rejoicings. The relish of permanent joy that characterises this state of divine rapture goes by the name of Rasa or taste. This is the essence of feeling (Rasa). "God himself is Rasa"—"*Raso Vai Sah.*" "*Rasam Hyevayaam Labdhva Anandee Bhavati*"—"By attaining this essence one becomes blissful." Thus declare the Upanishads. This is the keynote of the Bhakta's conception of the Absolute.

Rasa is a high state of emotion in the heart. Divine Rasa breaks the shell of ignorance and causes the Atman to reveal Itself. The Srimad-Bhagavata treats of the Rasas in the most perfect manner. The whole book is an embodiment of these Rasas. It shows how one can attain Perfection through cultivation of Rasas of Bhakti.

Bhava is a mental state—a feeling. Divine Rasa is a

Bhava which is pure and unalloyed, devoid of Rajas and Tamas. It calms and softens the mind and fills it with pure Sattva. This pure state of Sattva receives the Essence of the Soul or God. It reflects the Eternal Nature of Reality. There is thus Self-realisation or God-consciousness.

This Bhava, when deep rooted in the mind, is called Sthayi-Bhava or permanent mood. This is the basis of Rasa in as much as the relish which is the essence of Rasa lies here in an implicit state. It is nothing but the bliss potency of God that is called Rasa.

Bharata, the author of the Natyasastra, classifies Rasa into eight groups. Sringara (erotic), Vira (heroic), Karuna (pathetic), Adbhuta (marvellous), Hasya (ludicrous), Bhayankara (terrible), Bibhatsa (disgusting), and Raudra (furious) are the eight kinds of Rasas. To this the ninth Rasa, Santa (Peaceful), is added by other Rhetoricians.

In Bhakti Yoga, generally, there are five kinds of Rasas: Santi, Preeti, Sakhya, Vatsalya and Priyata or Madhura. From these Rasas develop the Sadhanas of Santa-Bhava, Dasya-Bhava, Sakhya-Bhava, Vatsalya-Bhava and Madhurya-Bhava. Thus devotion is a method of Self-realisation and not a mere play of emotions.

SANTA-BHAVA

In Santa-Rasa the mind of the devotee is full of knowledge and is emotionless. It is practised only by Paramahamsa Sannyasins and Jnanis of the highest type. Their emotions are stilled and they have direct consciousness of God where all emotions are fused into Divinity. Bhishma had emotions under control and is an example of Santa-Rasa Bhakta. He had no bubbling emotions. He was a stern devotee of God but not a slave of his emotions. He was a ruler of his emotions and so was a Jnani. Only Jnanis possess Santa-Rasa. Santa-Rasa is an attribute of Brahman or the Absolute. Brahman alone is Santa. And a Jnani who knows Brahman is also Santa.

A Bhakta of Santa-Bhava is indifferent to worldly things and is entirely dispassionate. Santa corresponds to Sama or calmness of mind. The Bhaktas practising Santa-Bhava are called Atmarama-Munis or Tapasvins. They rouse the Bhava of Santa through study of Upanishads and such scriptures, through living a life of seclusion, through intuitional flashes of Divinity and association with men of similar nature.

The Santa-Bhava is always tranquil and undisturbed and is not upset by external events. He is strong in his opinions and is not changed by other's remarks. He rests peacefully in God and appears like an ocean without waves. These are some of the characteristics of a Bhakta of Santa-Bhava.

DASYA-BHAVA

Dasya-Bhava is the outcome of Preeti-Rasa or Prema-Bhakti. It is a common factor which runs through the stages of Sakhya, Vatsalya and Madhura Rasas. The devotee always considers himself as the receiver of grace from the Lord. The devotee here loves God either with a love tinged with respect or love with a sense of greatness. The former is called "Sambhrama-Preeti" and the latter "Gourava-Preeti."

The Dasya-Bhakta always considers himself as inferior to God. He considers it his duty to worship and love God, for God is his Master. He serves God and serves the whole world as the manifestation of God. He is the servant of all. He is the slave of all beings. He considers all as his masters. For everything else except himself is God. The devotee feels that he is not God but all else is God. He craves to be protected by God at all times, for he has personally no power. He is Kinkara, a slave of God. The master should take care of the servant. The Dasya-Bhakta always prays to his Master, God, to save him. He is engrossed in the contemplation of God. He is finally lost in God through incessant contemplation.

SAKHYA-BHAVA

God is a friend. He is the most Supreme Comrade. He is the sole companion. He is the lover, protector and guide. He considers His devotee as a friend. "I am My devotee's heart, and the devotee is in My heart" says the Lord. The devotee considers God as his equal in relation, complexion, status, dress, qualification, etc. Still this is unaffected by a feeling of diffidence which the devotee possesses. The devotee always feels very much his separation from the Lord. A friend cannot live without the company of the other friend. Friends eat together, talk together, live together. The devotee cannot live without God.

VATSALYA-BHAVA

The devotee here feels that God is his son. Evidently God appears before him in the same personal relationship. What the devotee thinks that does God give to him. You get what you desire. This is the eternal law. The relationship between the devotee and God is that of a parent and a child. The love towards a child is transferred to God in the same fashion. The Lordship of God is sublimated to a state of the affection of childhood. God is not a master but a child. Generally this kind of feeling on the part of the devotee throws into the background the conception of the Absolute Nature of God. The devote develops a human relationship which if not directed in a proper way may not allow him to realise Absolute Identity. The devotee is liable to forget the great glory of God in his development of Vatsalya-Rasa or son-parent relationship. Certain devotees are so much attached to the conception of God as a son that even if God appears before them in his Supreme Form, they are unable to leave the idea that He is only a child. Only through the touch of Divine Grace can they be turned to the consciousness of the Absolute Nature of God. God is all compassionate and so He shall do it.

In females this Rasa causes even mammary secretion. The mental feelings have a direct action on the physical

body. Whatever one intensely thinks of, that certainly he becomes in no time.

MADHURYA-BHAVA

The highest development of Rasa is that of Madhurya. This is the attitude of the lover and the beloved. God is essentially Bliss. Madhura-Rasa is the manifestation of Pure Bliss. God is Pure Bliss. The essential nature of existence is Joy. The zenith of Love is reached in that between the lover and the beloved. Other loves are only partial. But the love connecting the lover and the beloved is the densest of all loves. It is hard to break this love. It is hard to understand this love. It is hard to develop this love.

God is a Prema-Murti. He is *"Sakshat manmatha-manmatha."* He is Cupid unto Cupid himself. God is the most beautiful and the lovely. He is Sundaram and Kantam. To Love Him is to express the fullness of affection. Love for God is not partial. Love for God is the completeness of emotion. Madhura-Rasa is the super-sensuous prototype of Sringara-Rasa.

In the common world it is found that the sensuous pleasure attains its highest stage of intensity in what is called conjugal love. On this analogy, the Sringara or the Madhura-Rasa is the highest state of development on the spiritual side. It is not carnal love but pure love devoid of clinging to earthliness. It is very difficult to develop this kind of Bhava. It is oftentimes more dangerous than effective in the case of beginner-Sadhakas.

Madhura-Rasa is the highest because in it all conventionalities and hesitations, reservations and personal views are cast off and love and love alone without blemish is developed. The highest intensity of Joy or bliss is attained in the development of Madhurya-Bhava. This is not an erotic or libidinous craving. This is pure love which cannot be understood by lustful persons. The majority of persons

cannot understand this, for the majority is devoid of pure heart.

In Madhura-Rasa, there is a craving for an embrace. Mutual embrace is the effect of the intensity of the expression of love. This is so both materially and spiritually. Materially it is a bondage born of attachment, but spiritually it is a means for liberation from infatuated love. The workings of the love appetite are inscrutable. They can be experienced and cannot be understood through the intellect. Even so in the case of the bliss of the Absolute Brahman. It is a state unable to be grasped and far away from reason and argumentation. Philosophers cannot understand it and metaphysicians cannot comprehend it. It is a state of the heart. What can the intellect do with it? No amount of ratiocination can give out the experience of a particular state. Intellect should stop if experience is to bloom forth. Love melts into experience. The devotee is lost in the love of his beloved.

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says: "Even as a husband when in fast embrace with his wife does not know either of the inside or of the outside, so also when the individual is in fast embrace with the Supreme, he knows nothing else, either internal or external." There is only Bliss and nothing else. Bliss is without objectification. The couple do not know wherefrom the bliss comes. They are simply merged in the ocean of Bliss. There is no consciousness of the subject and the object. The consciousness that I am the lover and that he is the beloved is lost in a state of pure and unalloyed bliss which is incapable of being explained. There is bliss in deep sleep but it does not come from any object. There is bliss in conjugation but it does not come either from the husband or the wife. There is bliss in the realisation of the Absolute which is neither from the subject nor the object. Bliss is the eternal nature of existence.

The deepest appetite is between the sexes, and the

devotee develops this Bhava in order to lose his individual consciousness in that of the object of Love.

Madhura-Rasa is of two kinds, viz, Sambhoga and Vipralambha. Sambhoga is a kind of intense Bhava which exceeds ecstasy of the eager union of the lovers wherein both are intensely selfless and desire each other's happiness. Its characteristics are manifold. Vipralambha is that which stands between their mutual union or separation whereby it intensifies the sweetness of their future union. It is of four kinds.

Purva Raga—the Rati which is generated at the first glance or on hearing about each other's goodness, merits and beauty, which also blends with Vibhavas etc.

Mana—the Bhava that hinders the union of the lovers who are unflinchingly entwined with each other at their heart of hearts, and which is unable to withstand the intense ecstasy of their union.

Pravasa—the condition of the lovers who were previously united but now separated by long barrier.

Premavaichitrya—the state of violent passion wherein the maiden lover pants from a vague sense of separation, though actually being in a state of ecstatic union with her lover.

May you all be established in Bhakti Bhava and Rasa and drink Sri Krishna Rasa.

A CAUTION

Madhura Rasa is absolutely different from conjugality of earthly experience. One should not be mistaken for the other. Earthly conjugality is purely selfish and is undertaken only because it gives pleasure to one's own self. But in love for God it is because it gives pleasure to God and not for the self of the devotee. Divine love is not selfish. It is born of Sattva. But earthly lust is born of Rajas and attachment to bodies. Earthly conjugality is the outcome of egoistic self-regarding feeling, while divine communion is

the outcome of other-regarding feeling devoid of egoism. Strong selfishness is the root of worldly passion. Divine Love is the product of loss of egoism. This is the greatest difference between lust and Divine Love. The one is Kama and the other is Prema. The two are related as darkness is related to light. No development of earthly affection, however perfect it may be, can lead one to the Supreme joy of divine communion. Lust lurks in the heart due to the passion that burns in the core of things. Divine Love is unknown to the man of the world, however religious he may be. The secret of Divine Love cannot be understood, and should not be tried to be understood, so long as man is only a man and a woman is only a woman. The austere transformation of the human into the divine is the beginning of true Love for God.

The highest stage of Madhura-Rasa is called Maha-Bhava. The devotee flies into a super sensuous state of bliss of the divine. The feeling of delight remains quite aloof from the contact of sensualism and gets absorbed in the being of the Eternal. The intermediate states of Sneha, Mana, Pranaya, Raga and Anuraga lead to the climax of Maha-Bhava where individual consciousness is lost in God-Consciousness. Intense feeling of Viraha is the step before Maha-Bhava. The Gopis of Vrindavan, Gauranga and Jayadeva are examples of Madhura-Rasa-Bhaktas or devotees of the highest type.

The devotee may follow any of these Bhavas or Rasas and attain the Divine. Ultimately he will reach the Madhura-Bhava and Maha-Bhava where ends the aspiration and craving of the individual.

ANUBHAVA AND SATTVIKA

Anubhava is stimulated by smile, dance and song. Smiling, singing, dancing etc., are Udvasvara Anubhava. Stupor and other sensations are included in Sattvika Anubhava. Anubhava is that feeling which exhibits the internal

emotions of its subject by outward symptoms such as dancing, singing, laughter etc.

That state of mind which is produced by realising the presence of Krishna or by associations immediately connected with His presence, is called Sattva. Emotions that arise from this Sattva are Sattvika. Stupor, perspiration, thrill, broken voice, shivering, change of colour, shedding of tears and suspension of animation are its eight outward symptoms.

DIVISION OF SEPARATION

The divisions of separation are Krishata (leanness), Taapa (affliction), Jagarya (sleeplessness), Alambasunyata (sense of helplessness), Adhriti (fickleness), Jadata (stupor), Vyadhi (disease), Murchhita (unconsciousness) and Mriti (death).

In separation there are two emotional states caused by extreme sentiment of love. They are Mohana (stupor), caused by lack of control over oneself owing to separation and Madana (rapture) wherein all the eight Sattvika Bhavas are evidenced.

RUDHA AND ADHIRUDHA BHAVAS

Madhura Rasa has two special features: Rudha (newly germinated) and Adhirudha (all-full, mature). Queen Rukmini and others had Rudha Bhava and the Gopis had the Adhirudha Bhava which is of two kinds, Madana and Mohana: Madana in the presence of Krishna and Mohana in his absence. Rudha is a kind of intense feeling which at the beginning of Prema generates and intensifies Sattvika Bhava, whereas Adhirudha is a state of deep emotion of a mature stage of Prema.

Among the two aspects of Adhirudha Bhava, Madana (amatory intoxication) is the fullest development of all the Bhavas of which Radha alone is the embodiment. Madana has various outward expressions of intense affection. Madana has mainly two expressions, Udghurna and

Chittrajalpa. Udghurna is a state of various emotional contortions caused by extreme sorrow of separation from the Lord. Chittrajalpa is outburst of the suppressed pathos of separation, and also of intense solicitude for the absent lover which gives way at the sight of the co-lover. Chittrajalpa is of ten kinds.

Ten Kinds of Chittrajalpa

The ten kinds of Chittrajalpa are:

Prajalpa—is a kind of haughty, upbraid expression of the lover (though out of wantonness) emanating from the depth of her intense love for the Beloved.

Parijalpita—is also a kind of the same expression, when she, out of her intense affection, boasts of her own superiority, and patience, arguing about her lover's careless indifference, roughness and insincerity.

Sujalpa—is the expression of lover's eagerness, panting and impatience when she strives to know about her Beloved's affairs, with an air of unpretending, alert, incumbent gravity.

Vijalpa—a taunting expression about her lover which clearly indicates her latent disturbed emotion.

Ujjalpa—the maiden's disdainful and regretful expressions about Krishna's jugglery and tricks.

Samjalpa—is a sort of regretful expression of the lover who ridicules her Beloved because of His indifference and uncaring attitude towards her.

Pratijalpa—here the maiden expresses to the messenger of Krishna her reluctance to go to Him, for He keeps company of other women.

Avajalpa—is a kind of expression of the maiden who out of her secret apprehension and jealousy, tells about her folly in having entwined herself in love with one who in return deceives and neglects her.

Abhijalpita—the maiden expresses how regretful it is

of Sri Krishna who is so cruel that He even gives pain to little innocent creatures like birds, and so, all should abstain from His company.

Ajalpa—The maiden regretfully accuses Sri Krishna of His deceit and crookedness, who can but give trouble and affliction, while Himself receiving happiness from others.

SELF-SURRENDER

Self-surrender is complete surrendering of the self to God. Self-surrender makes the devotee feel the reality of divine grace and Lord's readiness to bestow on him help at all times. The divine influence streams into his being and moulds it to make it a fit medium for divine realisation and divine instrumentality.

Surrender and grace are inter-related. Surrender draws down grace and grace makes surrender complete. Surrender starts the purification of the heart. Grace completes it. Without grace the complete unification is not possible. Grace divinises your being in order that the constant inflow and inspiration can be received and retained. It is through divine grace alone that your whole being is galvanised and rejuvenated.

You can realise the Absolute or Impersonal by surrender to the Divine. Surrender is not a thing that is done in a week or a month. You cannot make total surrender from the very beginning of your Sadhana.

The self-arrogating little ego persists and resists again and again. It clings leech-like to its old habits, cravings and desires. It wages guerilla war. It resists surrender. It demands certain objects for its secret gratification. The whole being should be surrendered. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says *"Tameva saranam gaccha sarvabhavena bharata"*—Flee unto Him for shelter with all thy being, O Bharata. The Chitta, the ego, the mind, the intellect and the soul should be placed at the feet of the Lord. Mira did

this and so she obtained Lord Krishna's grace and became one with Him.

The vulgar, stiff, obstinate ego is harder than diamond reinforced concrete or steel. It is very difficult to melt it. Constant vigilance and ceaseless effort are necessary to slay this dire enemy of peace and wisdom. It keeps subtle desires for its own silent appeasement. Introspect and find out the subtle desires that lurk in the corners of your heart through the search-light of concentration and discrimination and kill them ruthlessly through regular, silent meditation.

Do not bother about taking care of your body. God will save it if He needs it for further service in this body. Surrender it at His feet and rest in peace. He will take care of it. A real devotee says, "Let me take millions of births. It does not matter. But let me be attached to the Lotus-feet of Lord Hari. Let me have spontaneous devotion to the Lord. Let me be endowed with purity, spiritual strength, spirit of selfless service and divine virtues."

If you simply say without real inner feeling, "I am Thine, O Lord," this will not constitute real integral self-surrender. It should come from the core of your heart. You must be prepared for a radical change. You should not stick to your old habits, ways and motives. You should not expect that everything should happen in the way you want. You should live to carry out the divine purpose. You should not think of those ambitions which the mind likes to gratify. You should not think of using even the divine grace or the divine force for your own purpose. The irrepressible ego will assert in various ways and refuse to give up its old habits and ways. It will try to get everything from the Divine. It will totally decline to give itself to the Divine. That is the reason why aspirants do not make any substantial progress in the spiritual path even after doing Sadhana for several years.

There is no loss in self-surrender. You get from the Lord everything. You enjoy all divine Aisvarya of the Lord.

The whole wealth of the Lord belongs to you. Siddhis and Riddhis will roll under your feet. You become one with the Lord. You are freed from all wants and desires and cravings. The spiritually hungry and real thirsty aspirant who yearns for the vision of the Lord turns towards the Divine and is quite willing, eager and happy to consecrate his body, life, mind and soul at the feet of the Lord.

The first stage of self-surrender is only a firm resolve to surrender oneself to God or the Preceptor. A Sadhaka who has dedicated his life for the service of his teacher or the service of humanity or for attaining Self-realisation is not at all bound by the actions he performs, subsequent to his self-surrender. Self-surrender becomes perfect only after God-realisation.

Renunciation of the family life is the beginning of self-surrender. He who is endowed with burning Vairagya and discrimination and is really earnest for his spiritual rejuvenation can also do complete self-surrender even though he is in the world. In and through the world he realises the Lord by complete surrender of his entire being to Him. But it is only very few who are capable of doing this. Because, the worldly life is beset with innumerable obstacles and temptations and the aspirant finds it very difficult to attain complete dispassion in the midst of so many dissipations and distractions. Therefore, renunciation of family life makes his path easier and smoother. The seed is now sown. Then the aspirant goes to his preceptor and falls at his feet. Now the seed germinates. He starts the service of his Guru. As he advances in his devotion and sincere service, his surrender becomes more and more perfect and complete. His heart becomes purer and purer and gradually the light of knowledge dawns in him and he cognises the supreme Atman, which pervades all and everywhere.

The actions performed by the Sadhaka after renunciation do not bind him, as he offers all his actions as

offerings unto his preceptor or Lord. He does not do any action which can be considered as selfish. Thus through service of one's preceptor with utter self-dedication, his heart becomes purified, and ultimately the Lord becomes his preceptor. Now he is completely surrendered to the Lord and he attains the highest intuition.

In the beginning individual effort is very necessary. When surrender has been complete, the divine Grace dawns in him and the divine Power itself does the Sadhana for the Sadhaka. The descent of divine Grace and Power takes complete possession of his mind, will, life and body. Then the Sadhana goes on with tremendous speed.

Through self-surrender, the devotee becomes one with the Personal God or Saguna Brahman just as through self-denial the Vedantic student or aspirant in the path of Jnana Yoga becomes one with the Impersonal Absolute. The divine Grace destroys Satan and his kingdom.

The aspirant must not do any action which he is ashamed to tell in public. If he does any action, this will retard his spiritual progress. The physical body and the mind are offered at the altar of the service of Lord, who is manifest form of every being. Ultimately his mind merges in the soul within. The Sadhaka becomes a Jivanmukta or a liberated sage.

Sadhakas bold! The Lord loves you even when you turn away from Him. How much more shall He love you, if you turn to Him again sincerely with faith and devotion! Very great is his love, greater than the greatest mountains: very deep is His affection, deeper than the unfathomable depth of the ocean!

PARA BHAKTI

Para Bhakti is the highest form of Bhakti. Ordinary Bhakti which begins with the worship of idols with sandal paste, flowers and Arati ultimately culminates in Para Bhakti.

A devotee of this type does not worship idols. He does not ring bells. He does not wear Tilaka or marks on his forehead. He does not visit temples. He does not make Tirtha-Yatra. He is not bound by any rules or conventions. When the Vaidhi Bhakti reaches its full growth it becomes Para Bhakti. Vaidhi Bhakti is Bhakti as a form of discipline.

The whole world is Vrindavana for a devotee who is established in Para Bhakti. He beholds Lord Hari or Lord Krishna everywhere. He beholds himself as Lord Krishna.

Nammalvar had this experience. He would caress the earth and say "Oh! This is Vamana's earth." He would point out to the sky and exclaim "Lo, there is His Vaikuntha!" He would caress the cool breeze and say "This is my Achyuta." He consciously embraced the flames and said "O deathless Ananta." He raised his hands to the ocean and cried "Behold the sea where my supreme Lord reposes." He pointed to the hill and said "Come, Majestic Hari; see, my Vishnu has come." When he saw a black mass of cloud he said "That is my Lord Krishna."

Namadev was a devotee of Para Bhakti. He saw Lord Krishna everywhere. When the dog ran away with a dry bread, he ran with a cup of ghee to soften the bread with ghee. He saw Lord Krishna in the dog. So was Tukaram. He said "Just as sugar pervades the sugar-cane juice, Lord Krishna pervades the whole world." Prahlada saw his Hari in the pillar, and so he said to his father "Lord Hari is in this pillar." Prahlada's devotion was the supreme form of devotion.

Para Bhakti cannot be attained in a day or two. It takes a very long time for its development. One has to pass through the preliminary stages of Bhakti. He must visit temples, do perambulations, offer flowers and sandal paste and do Arati. He must serve Bhaktas, do Japa, Kirtan and meditation. He must practise Navavidha Bhakti or the nine modes of devotion. He must study Ramayana,

Bhagavata and other holy scriptures which treat of Bhakti. Spiritual evolution is gradual. The sin-hardened heart must be softened. The course of Bhakti discipline must be thoroughly undergone with faith, interest and zeal. Then alone will Vaidhi Bhakti blossom into Para Bhakti or supreme devotion.

By listening to and singing the glories of Krishna a natural feeling of love for Him is created. This feeling of affection (Rati) gets intensified and is known by the names Bhava, Prema, Maha-Bhava.

A Brahma Jnani says *"Sarvam khalvidam brahma,* All indeed is Brahman." A devotee of Para Bhakti declares *"Sarvam vishnumayam jagat,* The whole world is Vishnu only." *"Vasudevah sarvam iti,* All indeed is Vasudeva."

Para Bhakti and Janana are one.

SIVA BHAKTI SUTRAS

1. Now then an inquiry into Bhakti.
2. Bhakti is intense attachment to the Lord.
3. Develop the nine modes of Bhakti.
4. Cultivate the five Bhavas.
5. Serve the saints.
6. Be devoted to your Guru.
7. Have intense, unswerving faith.
8. Study Bhagavata, Ramayana.
9. Hear the Lord's Lilas and glory.
10. Feel the Divine Presence everywhere.
11. Do total, ungrudging self-surrender.
12. Recite Lord's Names always.
13. Sing His praise and do Kirtan.
14. The fruit of Bhakti is Jnana.
15. Para Bhakti and Jnana are one.

PUJA OR WORSHIP

INTRODUCTORY

Puja is worship of the Lord. This is one of the nine

modes of Bhakti. This is also called Archana. The Lord is worshipped either in His Nirguana or Saguna aspect. Even this worship is done either with external materials or merely mentally in the case of advanced devotees.

The Bhakta does Puja to his Ishta-Devata. The Puja is Vedic, Tantric or mixed as is suitable to the devotee. One may choose any method according to his liking.

Take bath in the morning. Perform your daily Sandhya or prayer. If there is an idol of the Devata it is good. Otherwise, worship can be done on the floor itself, after cleaning the place and drawing a Mandala there. Collect flowers, Dhoop, scented sticks, sandal paste, Arati (Dipa), camphor, fresh water, food-offerings (Bhog) to the Lord, a clean seat to sit on, a small bell, conch and cymbals if available.

Offer a prayer to the Lord with Bhava and devotion. Offer flowers or rice soaked in water with Kumkum (Akshata) to the Lord with His hundred and eight names or His Mula-Mantra repeated hundred and eight times. Offer Abhisheka with fresh water or milk or ghee or honey or Panchamrita as is convenient. Read elevating Stotras or portions of Bhagavata, Ramayana, etc., concerning the glories and Lilas of Bhagavan. If possible do Sahasranama Archana. Offer Arghya, Padya, Neerajana, etc. Mentally always think of the form of the Lord.

You should not get up in the middle of the Puja for collecting anything. Keep ready everything beforehand. As many Mantras, Stotras and prayers as possible should be repeated to kindle divine emotion. You should decorate the Lord with fresh clothes and garlands made of flower. Adore Him with ornaments, flowers, scent, sandal paste etc. Do it with intense love and devotion.

Offer to the Lord as Bhog sweet, cooked rice or some food that can conveniently be offered. Food specially

prepared with ghee, milk etc., and those prepared with curd, vegetables, butter are very much recommended.

The image should be rubbed with oil, cleaned, adorned and given all such loving treatment which one would give to his most beloved and dearest being in the world. Prepare various kinds of dishes for Bhog if possible and arrange for music, singing and dancing with divine Bhava on special days.

Do Mahapuja. Offer Arati, burn camphor, wicks dipped in ghee etc. Let there be singing of the Lord's glories and chanting of His Names. Offer prayers and surrender yourself to the Lord. Hear stories of the Lilas of the Lord as recorded in the scriptures. Say, "O Lord! Have mercy on me. Be gracious unto me."

Place your head on the Lord's feet and pray, "O Lord! Protect me from the ocean of Samsara with the shark of death in it. I am terribly afraid of it. I have taken shelter in Thee."

Offer Prasad to others. If possible feed some poor people every day. Give Dakshina. Give clothing. Worship the poor as the Lord.

Do everything with Nimitta Bhava. Have no selfish desires behind the worship you do.

MANASIKA PUJA

Manasika Puja is doing worship of the Lord without any external materials. All materials necessary for Puja are imagined in the mind and you feel that you are offering all of them to the Lord as in formal worship. This is more powerful than external worship. For, concentration is more in Manasika Puja than in Bahya Puja.

Mentally feel all that you do in external worship. Enthrone the Lord in your heart. Do Puja, offer Arati, Arghya etc. mentally. Do Shodasopachara-Puja mentally. This is only a feeling of what is otherwise done actually with hands. Feeling is more effective than action.

PARA PUJA

Para Puja is the highest kind of worship. This is the worship of the Jnanis. This is the effect of Realisation of the Self. The devotee feels that he can do nothing but only experience God. He says:

"O Lord! How can I worship Thee who is without parts, who is Existence itself? How can I pray to Thee when Thou art my very being itself? How can I offer Arghya, Padya etc. to Thee when Thou art ever pure? How can I offer anything to Thee when Thou art ever an Apta-Kama? Can I wave a candle to the Sun and can I bathe the ocean with a glass of water? How can I offer Bhog to Thee when Thou art self-contented?" And in this way the devotee feels the Infinite Nature of God. Para Puja is thus an illustration of impossibility of formal worship to God in consideration of His infinite and Eternal Nature full of Knowledge and Bliss. Para Bhakti and Para Puja belong to the same stage. At this stage the devotee becomes one with God and loses his individuality.

ANUSHTHANA

INTRODUCTORY

Anushthana is practice of religious austerity. It is observance of certain disciplines for the sake of obtaining some object of desire. The desire or the object may even be the final emancipation. Even that is a desire though it is generally not included as such. One who performs Anushthana has to be free from worldly engagements until the end of Anushthana. He should be completely engrossed in one thought and that is the thought concerned with the austere performance of the observances prescribed by the Sastras or scriptures. Such disciplines mould the man and make him fit to realise higher objects of his desires and ambitions.

Generally the highest form of Anushthana is unselfish worship of God for the sake of self-purification and final

emancipation. There is no Anushthana better than this. Other Anushthanas done for the sake of petty material ends are the outcome of ignorance and are not spiritual. Spiritual Anushthana is based on discrimination and has for its ideal the liberation of the soul from the round of birth and death.

Anushthanas can be practised for a day, a week, a fortnight, a month, fortyeight days, ninetysix days, three months, six months or one year. The duration of time depends upon the ability and the liking of the performer. He can choose any kind of Anushthana according to his circumstances.

Even the rigour of the Sadhana is dependent on the constitution and health of the individual. A sick man is not required to take cold bath thrice daily. An unhealthy man with very weak body is not required to observe absolute fast. A person suffering from an acute disease is not required to forego taking medicine. Commonsense is the fundamental factor in all Sadhana. No rule is an eternal rule. Rules change from place to place, time to time and from one condition to another condition. A Sadhaka of Madras may live only with a Langotee even in the dead winter. But a Sadhaka living in the icy Gangotri cannot be expected to practise the same method even in summer. The Himalayan climate is not like that of Trivandrum or Madras. To hold an umbrella when it is heavily raining is not against the practice of Anushthana. Anushthana is rigorous mental discipline and not mere physical mortification.

A pair of shoes used when walking over the glaciers of Kailasa or Manasarovar will not prove detrimental to Anushthana. Absolute necessities of the body are not hindrances. Abnormal cravings are against Anushthana, not the normal requirements. Strict Brahmacharya is an absolute necessity for all Anushthanas. Truth speaking and non-injury are absolute necessities, for these are mental disciplines.

Any action done against the feeling of the mind is not conducive to the rigour of the Anushthana. The actions of the mind alone are actions, not of the body. One who feels one thing and does another thing is a Mithyachari. To him the fruit of Sadhana will not accrue. The mind is the author of all actions. The body is only an instrument. Suppressing the effect when the cause is vigorously working will not add to the annihilation of the cause. The mind has to be calmed, and for that all Sadhanas are done in one way or other.

JAPA-ANUSHTHANA

An Ishta-Mantra is selected first. The object of Anushthana should be within the limits of the Mantra chosen, viz., one should not do Japa of Hanuman in order to get a son. Foolish desires should not be cherished when performing Anushthana. One should not do Anushthana for destroying or harming other beings. This is a great blunder. This will lead to the destruction of the performer himself, in case the other party is more powerful than the performer. Generally a sublime spiritual desire should be kept in view when any Anushthana is practised.

The Japa-Sadhaka should start his Anushthana in the early morning at Brahmamuhurta on an auspicious day. He should take a bath in a river or even in the water of a well if other water is not available. He should observe Mouna all along until the break of the day's Anushthana. The major portion of the day should be utilised for Japa. The Sadhaka should offer prayers to the Sun and his Ishta-Devata of the Mantra he is going to take up in Anushthana. He should offer his daily prayers and perform Sandhya. Then he should sit on a clean place facing the east or the north with a Mala in his hand. His mind should be concentrated on the deity of the Mantra. The purpose of the Anushthana should be borne in mind all along. Complete Mouna should be observed. The eyes should be shut.

The senses should be withdrawn. There should be no other thought except that of the Ideal before him.

The Sadhaka should not approach his wife at any time until the whole of the Anushthana is over for the prescribed period. There should not be any thought of wife, children and property during the performance of the Anushthana or even at period of rest at night. These are all hindrances in the attainment of the object desired out of the Anushthana.

It is better to feed at least one person daily until the end of the Anushthana. On the last day a Havan should be performed with Ahutis equal to one-tenth of the total number of Japa done. On the last day also a poor-feeding may be conducted for the satisfaction of one's self. Water-libations may be given equal to the number done in Havana or else (if it is found to be inconvenient) the number of Japa may be increased by that number.

To put it in a nutshell, Japa-Anushthana is performance of Japa for a protracted period with concentration of mind and without any thought of the external world. This leads to the achievement of the object of desire.

Generally as many Lakhs of Japa as there are letters in the Mantra are done. But it is better to do more than this prescribed number if the actual fruit of the Japa is to be acquired. The mind of man is generally very impure and it requires much labour to purify it in order to make it fit to concentrate on the Mantra and its Deity. Generally many Purascharanas are required to get the ideal in mind. One Purascharana does not bring the desired object, because human mind is ever distracted and is filled with Rajas and Tamas.

SVADHYAYA-ANUSHTHANA

The Sadhaka takes up the study of the Vedas, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, or the Bhagavata for reading. In the case of the Bhagavata it is called Saptaha. In the

case of the Vedas it is called Adhyayana. In case of the other two it is called Parayana. The Anushthatri should observe the same disciplines as enumerated above. Arghya (libation), Havan, etc., should be performed as in Japa-Anushthana.

OTHER ANUSHTHANAS

All Anushthanas can be performed on the same lines with slight changes according to the necessity of the occasion. A woman-Anushthatri will have slight changes in the rules regarding performance. She should not start the Anushthana during the time of her menses. Nor should the menses occur in the middle of the Anushthana. Generally it is better for them to take up Anushthana only for a period of less than a month. They should not suckle their children during the time of Anushthana. Even women should observe Brahmacharya during the performance of Anushthana. They also should take daily bath as in the case of men. All other rules are just like those of men. Women should not take to Anushthana of Gayatri-Japa or Veda-Adhyayana.

Generally by Anushthana the Sastras mean only Japa and Svadhyaya. Meditation is not considered as an Anushthana. It is a higher step where the word Anushthana loses its meaning. Worship also can be considered as an Anushthana, though it is not included in the orthodox conception. The rules for all Anushthanas constitute the central idea that there should be exclusive occupation in the performance of Anushthana to the total detachment from all family engagements or worldly activities. Even worldly thoughts should not enter the mind of the Anushthatri. Anushthana is great Tapas or austerity and should be performed with great reverence, faith and carefulness.

TIME-LIMIT FOR ANUSHTHANA

There is no time-limit for Anushthana. It all depends upon the liking of the individual. It can be done even for a single day. It has its own effect. But better it is to prac-

tise for long periods, since the mind is well disciplined in such practices. The longer the Anushthana, the greater the power the Sadhaka gets. He becomes like a Yogi, possessed of health, wealth, prosperity, knowledge and power. Whatever he wishes he gets. Anushthana can be performed even in night time. On the other hand, the practice at night is more powerful and brings quicker results than the Anushthana done during day time. The mind is calm and is free from the world at night. So it is that all practices at night have got a greater force or Samskara.

CONCLUSION

Anushthana is a precursor to the practice of Yoga. It disciplines the mind and prepares the mind for Yogic meditation. It is a severe Tapasya which, if not performed with any worldly desire, will lead the Sadhaka to the height of spiritual illumination.

ELEVEN POINTS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF BHAKTI

It would be a gross mistake if you consider Bhakti as merely a state of emotionalism, while it is actually a thorough discipline and training of one's will and the mind, a sure means to intuitive realisation of God Almighty through intense love and affection for Him. It is a means to thorough apprehension of the true knowledge of the Reality, beginning from the ordinary form of idol-worship right upto the highest form of cosmic realisation of your oneness with Him. You can achieve this by following the eleven fundamental factors which Sri Ramanuja had prescribed. They are—Abhyasa or practice of continuous thinking of God, Viveka or discrimination, Vimoka or freedom from everything else and longing for God, Satyam or truthfulness, Arjavam or straightforwardness, Kriya or doing good to others, Kalyana or wishing well-being to all, Daya or compassion, Ahimsa or non-injury, Dana or charity and Anavasada or cheerfulness and optimism.

Abhyasa or practice is a sustained and persistent effort

to achieve mastery over a certain thing. Through continued practice the Sadhaka tries to secure the steadiness of his mind, to restrain all its external Vrittis, thereby convulging them upon his one object—the Lord. Through persistent Abhyasa he checks the outgoing tendencies of his mind and directing them inward he constantly dwells and meditates upon the Lord.

Viveka or discrimination enables him to choose between the right and the wrong: to follow and to adhere to what is right i.e., what should be done, and to abstain from what is wrong i.e., what should not be done. How does he discriminate between the right and the wrong? That which elevates and takes him nearer to God—his Ideal—that which brings him good, joy and peace, he considers as right and adheres to and acts in accordance with it. That which brings him depression, pain and restlessness, that which pricks his true conscience, that which drags him down from goodness and takes him away from God he considers as wrong and abstains from it in toto and guards himself against its influence. As regards his diet, he discriminates between Sattvic food, i.e., what should be taken, and Rajasic or Tamasic food, i.e., what should not be taken. Thus he discriminates between the right and the wrong, follows the directions of the wise, respects their warnings and obeys their admonitions and commandments. Thus he perseveres and strives to reach his goal, following the path of righteousness.

Vimoka is longing for God alone, renouncing everything else that does not accelerate his progress. Obviously one has to renounce what is earthly if he wishes to attain what is eternal, permanent and infinite. The Sadhaka has to renounce all his desires and cravings for the material objects: he has to renounce the evil Vrittis of the mind through introspection and right exertion. Only then can he develop true longing for God, only then can he proceed Godwards. You cannot drink two things at a time in the

same cup. If you wish to progress Godwards, then, necessarily, you have to renounce all else that are not conducive to your progress. This is the secret. To want nothing is the greatest and most efficacious way to attain the keenest longing for God.

Satyam or truthfulness is surely the prime postulate in Sadhana. God is Truth: to realise Him, therefore, you must need become the very embodiment of Truth. You have to live the Truth: you should have to think of truth alone, speak the truth alone and do what is right and true to your conscience.

Arjavam is straightforwardness or honesty. There is no place for deceit, crookedness or falsehood in the quest for God. God neither wants your riches nor your intellect, but he wants only a pure truthful heart altogether shorn of deceit, shallowness and hypocrisy. There is nothing to hide from Him, for He is the all-knowing, all-pervading Spirit. Your heart must be as pure as the white snow and as clear as crystal. Just as you cannot see a clear and correct reflection in a corrugated, dust-coated mirror, even so, if your heart is cobwebbed by selfish desires and dishonesty, and corrugated by hypocrisy and crookedness, you can hardly know the real nature of God. The Sadhaka must cultivate a heart like that of a child.

Kriya or doing good to others comes next. As a true devotee, you should behold Him in all for He is the manifest form in whatever you perceive. The Sadhaka's foremost duty is to do good and serve others, irrespective of any distinction or personal consideration. Serving and helping those in distress open your eyes to the sorrows of human life. You begin to understand the painful nature of the worldly existence. The stony selfish heart learns to feel for others. Then compassion, mercy and love nurture in your heart. Your heart becomes purified and Vairagya dawns in you.

Kalyana or wishing well to others is another necessary

qualification for devotee. With a pure loving heart, you should pray to the Lord for the good and well-being of others. First pray for others, for the peace and welfare of the world, and then for your evolution. You should not entertain any grudge or ill-feeling towards your opponents but you should wish for all that is good and auspicious. This is the true spirit of a devotee.

Daya or compassion comes next. God is Love. He is all-merciful and compassion personified; and as you seek to realise Him, you must need become a veritable ocean of mercy and love. You must cultivate a heart as broad as the infinite sky.

All the divine virtues that are necessary for one's evolution have their origin in Ahimsa or non-violence. Ahimsa is a life-giving force. Ill-will, hatred, anger and malice cannot stand before its mighty potency. It is a special attribute of the soul. Practice of Ahimsa culminates eventually in the realisation of unity and oneness of life. It generates the feeling of universal brotherhood and cosmic love.

Next is Dana or charity. 'Charity covereth multitude of sins,' proclaimed Jesus Christ. Abundant, spontaneous charity with a pure heart for relieving the suffering of the distressed is a potent means to elevate the heart and to destroy its shallowness and impurities. You must have a large heart. The more you give, the more will come to you. This is the law of nature.

Anvasada is cheerfulness and hope. This is an essential virtue for a devotee. There is no room for depression in the spiritual path. You must be optimistic, zealous, persevering. There are many active forces that will oppose your progress and actually assail and pull you down. But you must not lose your hope or be depressed. You have to brave the storm and proceed in spite of the difficulties and adverse conditions that try to cow down to push you off from the path of Sadhana. With cheerful perseverance and optimistic zeal, relying on the

inner self you should proceed with Sadhana and ultimately the success will be yours.

BHAKTI YOGA ALPHABETS

ANANYA Prema is single-minded devotion to the Lord exclusive of everything else.

BHAKTI Yoga is the easiest path for God-realisation in this Iron Age.

CHANDRAYANA Vrata is observed by the devotees to destroy and propitiate the Lord.

DASYA Bhava is the servant Bhava entertained by the devotee towards the Lord.

ESHANATRAYAM (the three desires—wealth, children and heaven) stand as hindrance to the development of true devotion.

FAITH in the existence of God is the foundation of Bhakti.

GURU is the visible God on earth for the devotee.

HORRIPILATION (Pulaka) is the standing up of the hairs of the body experienced by the devotee as he advances in devotion.

ISHTA-DEVATA is the deity of one's liking or choice by the worship of whom the Bhakta attains God-consciousness.

JAPA of the names of the Lord brings purity of mind and increases concentration to a great degree.

KRISHNA is the Supreme Deity, the destroyer of the stains of Kali.

LAJJA for the utterance of the Names of the Lord is a great obstacle for beginners in the path of devotion.

MADHURYA Bhava is the highest form of Bhakti.

NAVA-VIDHA Bhakti should be practised by all aspirants in the path of Bhakti Yoga.

OFFERING the body, mind and soul exclusively to the service of God is Saranagati (self-surrender).

PADASEVANA is service of the Lotus Feet of the Lord or service of humanity with Narayana Bhava.

QUIESCENCE of the mind is a qualification common to both the Vedantin and the Bhakta.

RUCHI (Nama) is the taste for the repetition of the Names of the Lord.

SAKSHATKARA is attainment of God-consciousness.

TRISHNA (internal craving for sensual objects) is detrimental to the growth of Bhakti.

UPASANA is worship of the Lord.

VIRAHA is intense pain caused by the separation from the Lord that is felt by a sincere devotee.

WEEP for the separation of the Lord but not for the death of relatives or loss of wealth.

X'MAS holidays should be availed of for the completion of at least one Purascharana of your Ishtâ-Mantra.

YOGAKSHEMA of the devotee is vouchsafed by the Lord.

ZEAL and sincerity of purpose pave a long way in God-realisation.

THE PSEUDO PARA-BHAKTAS

An ignorant neophyte in the path of devotion says "I practise Para Bhakti. There is no need for me to go to the temples and worship idols. What is there in worshipping idols, offering flowers and waving light?" He is labouring under a serious delusion. This is the state of those who proceed in the spiritual path without the advice or aid of the spiritual preceptor. They do whatever they like. They follow the promptings of the lower mind. They do not make any spiritual progress. They are also like the pseudo Vedantic students.

It is very difficult to develop Bhakti. Bhakti Yoga is as much difficult as Vedanta or Jnana Yoga. The internal enemies, viz., lust, greed, anger, hatred, egoism and jealousy are very very powerful. They stand in the way of cultivating devotion.

The aspirant should pass through the various initial stages or Bhumikas of Bhakti Yoga, just as a student should go through Matriculation, F.A. and B.A. before he sits in the M.A. class.

He should practise Chariyai and Kriyai to begin with. He should visit temples and do Puja. He should make gar lands of flowers for the Lord. He should sweep the floor of the temple. He should bring water for Abhisheka. He should clean the light. He should put lights. He should ring the bells. All these should be done with faith, devotion and intense Bhava. He should prostrate again and again before the Deity. He should do Parikrama (perambulation) round the temple.

Some aspirants think that it is beneath their dignity to ring bells, clean lights, bring water and make garlands of flowers. They think that it is the work of a menial servant.

Such aspirants cannot even dream of developing Bhakti even in crores of births. They have not understood the alpha and beta of Bhakti Yoga.

Study the lives of sixtythree Nayanars, the Tamil Saints of Southern India. They were illiterate but they had intense and unswerving devotion to the Lord. They practised day-in and day-out Chariyai and Kriyai or the preliminary purificatory services in the temple. They attained Siva-Sayujya through these practices alone.

It is very difficult to reach the stage of Para Bhakti. Para Bhakti and Jnana are one. Para Bhakti is the highest Bhakti. It comes through total, unreserved, ungrudging self-surrender. Mira, Namadeva, Gouranga, Ekanatha had this Bhakti.

If the aspirant falsely and foolishly imagines that he has attained the highest state of Para Bhakti and neglects the practice of Chariyai and Kriyai, his little devotion also will evaporate quickly. He will soon fall into the deep abyss of worldliness or Maya.

Be humble and simple. Think that you are only a very small student in the Bhakti Yoga class. Strengthen your aspiration. Be vigilant. Be in the company of devotees and protect yourself from temptations or worldly influences. Be ever vigilant. Only then can you grow in Bhakti. Only then will the divine Grace descend.

False Tushti and contentment is a serious obstacle in the spiritual path. Maya works in a variety of ways. It assumes various forms and deludes the aspirant in a variety of ways. When the aspirant has not reached even the second Bhumika of Bhakti, he falsely thinks that he is in the highest state of Para Bhakti. This is Maya. He gives up Sadhana. Further progress is stopped by such false imagination. If he lives under a Guru his defects will be pointed out, but he does not want to do so. He has a false idea of independence. His arrogance, imperative, self-assertive nature, self-sufficiency, vanity, act as intoxicating veils and stumbling blocks. He himself does not know what he is really doing, what his real position is.

He who has reached the stage of Para Bhakti will be absolutely fearless, desireless, angerless, I-less, mineless. He will be extremely humble. He will have no attachment for anything. He will be enjoying all Divine Aisvarya. He will be in possession of all virtues enumerated in the 12th chapter of the Gita. He will be above body-consciousness. If he does not possess all these marks or signs of a Bhakta, but he simply says "I am a Para Bhakta," do not believe him. He is a Mithyachari or hypocrite. Have no value of his words. People shed false tears through habitual lachrymal irritation. These are not the sincere, tear-drops of Prema of a

devotee. Do not mistake emotion for devotion. Be on the alert.

May Lord give them proper understanding. May this earth be free from such pseudo Para Bhakti aspirants. May the world abound with real, thirsty, sincere, humble devotees, who can charge everything with faith, devotion, joy and bliss.

NAMA-APARADHA

(Offences Against Divine Name)

It is true that utterance of Divine Name can absolve us from all sins and enable us to attain salvation or love of God (both of which are so difficult to get) but that is possible only when the Name is uttered with faith and reverence and the practice is free from all taints of sin against the Name viz., the following ten offences:

1. Vilification of saints and devotees.
2. Differentiation among (Divine) Names.
3. Irreverence towards preceptor (Guru).
4. Speaking lightly of the scriptures.
5. Treating the glory of Name as nothing but exaggerated praise.
6. Commission of sins under the cover of the Name.
7. Ranking the Name with other virtues and practising fasting, charity, sacrifice etc.
8. Recommending practice of Name to irreverent and ungodly persons who are not prepared to hear such advice.
9. Want of love for the Name even after hearing its glory.
10. Emphasis of 'I' and 'mine' and attachment to objects of enjoyment.

If through inadvertence one lapses into any of the

above ten sins, the only way to absolve from it is to repeat the Name again and repent for the mistake. *"Namaparadhayuktanam namanyeva harantyagham; Avishranyaprayuktani tanyevarthakarani cha."* (Padma Purana)—"The Name itself is the best atonement for sins committed against the Name. Through constant Kirtan of the Name all our desires can be fulfilled."

BOOK TWO

BHAKTI RASAMRITAM

BHAKTI MARGA

SALUTATIONS TO SRI RAMA KRISHNA HARI

O Lord Krishna of Guruvayur,
O Panduranga Vittal of Pandarpur,
O Lord Jagannath of Puri,
O Badri Narayan of Badri,
O Lord Rama of Ayodhya,
O Lord Venkatesa of Tirupati!
Salutations unto Thee.

O Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam,
O Padmanabha of Trivandrum,
O Dvarakesa of Mathura,
O Sri Rama of Bhadrachalam,
O Vatapatrasayi of Srivilliputhur,
O Varadaraja of Conjeevaram!
Adorations unto Thee.

O Govindaraja of Chidambaram,
O Banki Bihari of Brindavan,
O Lord Vishnu of Vaikuntha,
O Lord Krishna of Goloka,
O Lord Rama of Saketapuri!
Prostrations unto Thee.

EASY WAY FOR WORSHIP

Life is complex nowadays,
Struggle is keen;
Here is an easy way
Of worshipping the Lord.
Consider your house

As a temple of the Lord,
Or Brindavan or Ayodhya;
Your wife, children and others
The holy company of Bhaktas.

Consider every word you speak
As the Japa of the Lord's Name,
And the praise of the Lord;
Every action as service of the Lord.
Your lying in the bed,
As prostrations before the Lord;
Your daily walk and moving about
As perambulation of the Lord.

Consider the lights that you burn
In the evening
As waving lights to the Lord.

Consider sleep as Samadhi;
Give the food as offering
To the Lord
And then take it as His Prasad.
You will attain happiness
Here and hereafter,
If you worship God in this way.

Life is short, time is fleeting,
Start doing it right now.

FORGIVE ME, O LORD!

O Baktapriya
O Expert Doctor
In curing the disease of births!
I place my trust in Thee alone.
I appeal to Thee alone
To save me from death.
You can X-ray and operate;
Do anything you like.
Forgive my misdeeds—
I spent my childhood uselessly;

In youth I was proud and ignorant.
There is no limit to my desire;
I do not know any Sadhana,
I have not done any Sadhana;
Make me Thy servant,
And give me peace of mind.
Forgive my sins,
Just as a mother forgives
Her dear children.
Leave me at Thy lotus feet.
At last I have come to Thy door,
Give me faith and devotion,
Give me light and wisdom.
I am Thy disciple,
Suppliant to Thee,
Teach me.

FOUR KINDS OF BHAKTAS

Arta—the suffering,
Jijnasu—the seeker
For knowledge,
Artharthi—the self-interested,
And Jnani—the wise,
Are the four kinds of devotees.
Noble are all these;
But of these, the wise is the best.

Draupadi
Was an Arta Bhakta;

She was in distress:
She wanted clothing.

Nachiketas
Was a Jijnasu Bhakta;
He was a seeker after truth.

Dhruva
Was an Artharthi Bhakta;
He wanted Dominion.

Sukadeva
Was a Jnani Bhakta.

Prahlada had
Nishkama Bhakti
From the very beginning;
He was the jewel
Among Bhaktas.

Dhruva became
A Nishkama Bhakta,
After he had vision of the Lord.

Develop Bhakti
In any way;
Sakama Bhakti also
Will turn into Nishkama.

BHAVA IN BHAKTI

BHAKTI BHAVAS

Jayadeva and Gouranga
Had Madhurya Bhava—
The attitude of
Lover and beloved.

The Gopis had Sakhi Bhava,
They made Radha happy;
They merged in Krishna
Through Radha.

Hanuman had Dasya Bhava—
The attitude of
Master and servant.

Arjuna and Guha
Had Sakhya Bhava—
The attitude of Friend.

Yasoda and Vishnu Chitta
Had Vatsalya Bhava;
Krishna was their darling.

Bhishma had Santa Bhava—
He had emotions under control.

Have any kind of Bhava
That suits your temperament.
Develop it again and again.
The Bhava establishes
True relationship
Between the Lord
And the devotee.

MADHURYA BHAVA

Without Thee, O Beloved,
I cannot live.
As the lotus without water,
As the chaste wife without her husband,
So do I feel, without Thee.

The pangs of separation
Afflict my heart.
Come, come my beloved,
Soothe this burning heart.

I live and move, O beloved,
In Thee alone;
I have been enchanted
By Thy marvellous beauty;
I have given Thee my all.

My mind is ever in Thee,
Thy love devours me,
Who can console me
In this world?

O Wind! Have you got
Any message from my Beloved?
O Lily! Have you seen
My beloved Krishna?
O Clouds! Tell Krishna
My pitiable condition.

I pine for Him;
The flames of passion
Burn me;
My heart melts.

SAKHYA BHAVA

O my friend Krishna!
You are a stealer of butter;
You are a mischief-monger:
You break the Gopis' pots.
You are a truant.
You play with the Gopis,
You hide their clothes;
You kill even a woman,
You killed Pootana.
You are wicked,
You dance with others' wives
And do Rasa Lila;
You play the flute,
All Gopis run to you.
You are fond of killing,
You killed all the Asuras;
Where is Ahimsa for you?
And yet I love you, Krishna!
Thou art my beloved friend;
Thou art omnipotent,
You multiplied in Rasa Lila.
You are passionless,
You are omniscient.
Thou art my Supreme Guru,
Teach me Gita;
Let me dwell in Thee.

DASYA BHAVA

O Lord Rama—
Beloved consort of Sita—
I am Thy slave;
Thou art my Master.

I cling to Thy feet;
I have no other refuge.
I praise Thy feet,
I sing Thy glory.
Thou art my sole shelter,
I have no other hold;
I live to serve Thee.
Thy Name is a boat
To cross this Samsara;
Direct Thy gracious look
On Thy servant:
I am devoted to Thee alone.
I look for Thy Grace;
I have surrendered
Everything unto Thee:
I have consecrated
My *tan, man, dhan*
At Thy lotus feet.
I am Thine;
All is Thine;
Thy will be done.

VATSALYA BHAVA

My darling,
My sweet Krishna,
Do not cry;
Sleep in the golden cradle
Of my heart:
I shall sing
Cradle song for Thee—
Araroo! Araroo!!
The flute of my darling
Is sweeter than the nectar;
Narada forgot his Vina,
The cows stood like images,
The whole world is spell-bound,
The Gopis ran to him,
The deer stood

Like painted pictures.
O Dear child!
O my joy,
O solace of my life,
Thou art my all!
Do your feet ache
With pain?
Do not go to the forest tomorrow;
Be here with me always:
Why are you so mischievous?
I shall not punish you,
I love you,
My blue-coloured darling.

NAVAVIDHA BHAKTI

O Destroyer of Narakasura!
I find happiness in Thy lotus feet;
I feel happiness in Thy remembrance;
I realise bliss in singing Thy glory.
I am like a sea-bird,
Whose weary wings
Find rest on the mast of a ship.
I hold Thy feet;
I look for Thy grace,
Just as a lotus
Looks towards the Sun.
My heart melts
At Thy thought;
Thou art my only aspiration—
My sole refuge.
I adore Thee, O Govinda!
I remember Thee, O Ananta!
I dance before Thee O Narayana!
I prostrate before Thee, O Madhusudana!
I hear Thy Lilas, O Vamana!
I write Thy Mantra, O Sridhara!
I do Japa of Thy Name, O Hrishikesha!

I offer flowers, O Padmanabha!
I serve Thy feet, O Govinda!
I surrender to Thee, O Vishnu!

WHY ARE YOU RELUCTANT, MY LORD

O Radha Krishna!
Ocean of Mercy!
O Saviour, O Protector!
O Destroyer of Karma,
Lord of Rukmini,
Sleeper on the Serpent,
Save me, O Guru!
I know of none else.
When shall my eyes
Feast on the splendour of Thy grace?
When shall my tongue sing
Thy glory always?
When shall my hands
Worship Thy feet with flowers?
When shall my heart melt
At the sight of Thy lotus eyes?
Thou art reluctant, my Lord,
To redress my grievances;
Yet I cling to Thy feet,
Like the child that is pushed away
By the angry mother.
I have no other refuge,
I have no other hold.

GRANT THIS BOON, O GOVINDA!

O Kesava, O Mukunda!
I prostrate before Thee;
Let me have,
Through Thy grace,
An unbroken remembrance,
Of Thy lotus feet,
And Thy glorious Name.
Let me meditate on Thee,

In the chambers of my heart.
O Destroyer of Mura!
May I have unshakable faith
In Thy lotus feet.
Let me drink the nectar
Of Thy sweet Name.
Please take me
As Thy servant
Of your servant's servant.
When the throat is choked
With phlegm,
At the time of departure
Of my vital breaths,
Stand before me
With flute in Thy hand
And bless me.
Prostrations unto Thee.

EASY MEANS OF SALVATION

In Kali Yuga chanting of Lord's Name,
Nama Smarana or Japa or Kirtan,
Will purify you quickly;
This is the easiest, safest.
Nearest, quickest,
Surest and cheapest
Way for God-realisation.
Do not say I know not meditation;
You simply think of Lord Krishna:
Only say 'Narayana,' 'Hari Om.'
Do not say I have not taken bath;
Do not say I know not Tapas and Japa:
But only say Sri Krishna,
Sri Ram, Sita Ram.
Do not say I know not how to worship;
Do not say I have not studied scriptures:
But simply sing "Hare Rama Hare Krishna."
Do not say I have no time;

Repeat Sri Ram while walking,
Eating, bathing, playing tennis.

THOU ART MY SOLE REFUGE

Thou art the flower;
I am the fragrance.
Thou art the ocean;
I am the river.
Thou art the sun;
I am the ray.
Thou art the soul;
I am Thy body.
I am the *Chatak bird*,
I look for Thy drops of grace.
I cannot live without it.
Even if you kick me,
Even if you reject me
With disdain,
I shall lie down at Thy door;
I shall cling to Thy lotus feet.
Thy anklets jingle sweetly;
A promise of protection for me.
Lord Parjanya may be indifferent;
But the crops look up,
For the dark clouds.
Even so O Janardana!
I look to Thee alone
For the drops of Thy grace.
Otherwise I will be parched to death.

I SURRENDER UNTO THEE

I surrender unto Thee
O Lord of Lakshmi,
O Mukunda! O Kesava!
My *Tan, Man, Dhan,* are Thine;
I am Thine, All is Thine,
Thy Will be done.
Thou art everything,

Thou doest everything;
Thou art just,
Thou art Dharma.
Just as the chaste wife
Clings to her husband
Even if he rejects her,
So also I cling to Thee alone.
Thou art my beloved,
Even if you drive me away,
Even if you deny shelter to me,
I shall always praise Thy Glory.
Thou art my King:
I am Thy subject.
Thou art my Lord:
I am Thy servant.
Even if You do not look at me,
Even if You spurn me,
I will cling to Thy grace;
I have no other refuge.

TAKE PITY ON ME, O LORD

O Gopi-Vallabha,
O Radha-Vallabha,
O Sita-Vallabha,
O Varada, O Dayakara,
O Anatha-Rakshaka,
O Apat-Bandhava,
O Seshasayin,
O Jagannivasa,
Prostrations unto Thee!

Glory, glory to Krishna—
The light of the Yadu's race,
The son of Devaki,
Salutations unto Thee.

I am really forlorn;
Thou art merciful by nature:
Take pity on me, my Lord—

Let me have unflinching devotion unto Thee,
Let me be unto my hundred births
Be with Thee only;
Serving Thy will alone
Let me not hear any story,
Other than Thy glorious deeds:
Let me not be born
In any of my future births,
As one deprived
Of Thy worship and service.

FEELING OF SEPARATION

VIRAHA AGNI

The whole world is sleeping,
I sit awake, O Lord,
Have mercy on me,
I am sleepless.
When shall I meet Thee?
When shall the hour of Joy come?
My eyes ache for Thy vision;
I am restless, O Lord!
My heart-ache will cease
Only after meeting Thee.
One hour seems one year;
I am waiting to meet Thee.
Do not be cruel, my Lord,
My heart is burning.
Owing to pang of separation
My body is emaciated,
My appetite is gone;
I am like a fish out of water.
Thy Name is on my lips,
Thy Name is sweet;
I am like the *Chatak*
That cries for the clouds;
Allay my anguish of heart,
Remove my heart-burning;

Extinguish my Viraha-Agni
Meet Thou soon!
My Prananath!

VIRAHA

O Red-coral-mouthed
O Primeval Light,
O ocean-born Nectar
That comes to destroy birth,
O Diamond of the first water,
The Essence of the Vedas four,
The priceless gem,
O Lord of Vaikuntha!
How shall I remain
Separate from Thee?
My eyes are ever tearful;
Come, stand before me.
My soul drops,
I sigh and sob,
I am much afflicted;
My heart melts
By the fire of Viraha.
I cry in the mid hour of the night;
I am sleepless:
My appetite is gone,
I am pining, O Lord,
Delay not a minute:
Come, come, my beloved,
Thou art without mercy.
What shall I do?
Desirous of seeing Thee
I faint;
Looking heavenward,
I do weep and pray:
How long shall I remain
Separate from Thee?
I cast expectant eyes
On all sides;

I bend and shrink in shame;
How long shall I thus remain
And cry bitterly?

SHOW THY FORM

O Lion! That came roaring,
Splitting the pillar,
To tear Hiranya
And protect Prahlada.
O Vamana who scaled
The three worlds;
O Rama! who conquered Lanka:
O Hero! who lifted
The Govardhana Hill—
O Great Vishnu!
Direct Thy gracious look on me.
My heart is filled with Thy love,
I cast my eyes on all sides;
My eyes desire to behold Thee
In bodily form with four hands;
When shall I behold Thee?
My mouth has become dry;
I shrink and waste
With heavy sorrow.
Thou art merciless—
And showest Thyself not;
I cannot speak out my heart,
Take me into Thy presence;
Let me stand beneath
Thy lotus feet;
I cannot wait any longer:
Come quick, show Thy form.

PRAYER TO LORD KRISHNA

SRI KRISHNA'S FORM

O Lord of Brindavan,
Enchanting is Thy form;
Thy complexion is blue,

Thou art sea-coloured,
Thy eyes are lotus-like.
On Thy bosom
Is the Vaijayanti wreath;
The flute on Thy coral lips
Is enchanting.
Kireetam on Thy head
Is effulgent;
Srivatsa and Kaustubha
Are sparkling:
Vanamala is beautiful.
The trinkets in Thy feet
Sound very sweet;
Makara Kundal on Thy ears
Are sparkling.
Pitambar is shining;
Keyura is radiant;
Thy pose with crossed legs
Is alluring.

DELIVER ME, O KRISHNA

I bow to Sri Krishna;
I am devoted to Sri Krishna:
I am dedicated to Sri Krishna.
I am a disciple of Sri Krishna.

O Krishna—Heart of Radha—
Devaki is Thy mother,
Vasudeva is Thy father,
Arjuna is Thy friend,
Brahma is Thy son;
Rukmini is Thy consort,
Devas are Thy servants,
The Vedas are Thy songsters.
The world is Thy Vision,
Salvation is Thy Grace.

I do not know what else Thou art?
Thou art Purushottama,

Thou art weilder of disc,
Thou art slayer of Madhu-Kaitabha,
Thou art destroyer of Kamsa,
Thou art preceptor of Uddhava,
Thou art holder of Saranga,
Thou art bestower of Moksha.

O Ananta, O Janardhana,
O Vasudeva, O Damodara,
O Trivikrama, O Hrishikesa!
Absolve me from all sins;
Deliver me quickly
From this ocean of Samsara!

WIPE MY TEARS

O Flute-Bearer,
My heart yearns for Thee;
It is filled with Love:
No one knows my anguish.
With tears, I nourish
The creeper of Prem;
I have dedicated myself
To Thee, O Lord of Radha.
The sharp arrow of Thy love
Has pierced my heart;
Quench the fire:
Come quickly to meet me.
You have entwined my soul;
I am steeped in the decoction of Thy love.
Remove my heart-ache
Wipe my tears, my Lord,
And dwell in my heart.
I await Thy arrival, O Lord,
Every second, every minute,
Come Thou and meet me early.
My heart is afflicted;
Fulfil my desire, O Lord!
You only know my heart;

To whom shall I reveal
The secrets of my heart?

KRISHNA TATTVA

Sri Krishna is
Para Brahman Himself;
He is the Supreme Lord:
He is the Indweller
Of our hearts.

He is Existence Absolute,
Knowledge Absolute,
Bliss Absolute.
He is the Soul of this world;
He is the Supreme Self
From whom is born
This mysterious universe;
By whom alone it is upheld,
In whom it is dissolved.

He is Lila Purshottama,
He is Yogesvar,
He is Prema Murti;
He is the Supreme Tattva,

He is the Lord of Beauty:
He is the Lord of Death.
He is Immanent,
He is Transcendent.
He has Chinmaya body,
He has Anandamaya body,
He is Rasa.

WHAT IS RADHA TATTVA

Sri Radha is the world-mother;
She is an incarnation of Lakshmi.
She was born in Barsana—
In the Brij Bhumi,
Near Brindavan.

She is an embodiment of
Sri Krishna Prem:
She is Maha Bhava:
She is Hladini Sakti.
She is Ananda aspect.
Hladini Sakti
Is delight-giving energy
Of Lord Krishna.

Radha is the queen
Of all the maidens of Brija;
Radha and Krishna
Are inseparable
Like fire and heat,
Like jasmine and its fragrance.

She is Krishnamayi;
She is the chief
Of Krishna's energies:
She is the presiding deity
Of Lakshmis of Vaikuntha.

The quintessence
Of Ananda-Chinmaya Rasa
Is Radha.
Glory to Radha,
The consort of Lord Krishna.

PRAYER TO LORD HARI

HEAR MY HUMBLE PRAYER

When Gajendra was in trouble,
You ran barefooted;
When Prahlada was in distress,
You came out of the pillar;
When Draupadi was in affliction,
You gave her infinite cloth.
Why have You not heard my cry?
The crocodile of lust has caught hold of me,
The lust-Hiranyakashipu is attacking me,

The anger-Dussasana is assaulting me,
Please come to my rescue!
Don't delay a minute.
O Lord with lotus eyes,
O Lord of the Gopis,
O Father of the three worlds,
O destroyer of Kamsa,
O Brother of Balarama,
O Home of the worlds,
O Slayer of Madhu!
Just hear my humble prayer.

HARI IS THE REAL FATHER

I claim Lord Hari only
As my own—
Mine is Lord Narayana,
None else;
Father or mother or brother
Is not mine.
They are my enemies,
They are obstacles in the path;
I abandoned all kith and kin.
Prahlada left his father,
Vibhishana his brother Ravana,
Bali abandoned his Guru,
The Gopis their husbands,
Bharata left his mother.
Relationship with Hari
Is alone true and happy;
Hari is the real father and mother.
Lord's grace has lighted my path;
The company of saints
Has elevated me:
Solitude is a blessing.
Meditation on the Ganges bank
Has opened Vaikuntha's door;
I drink the nectar of Prem,
I move about happily.

WAKE UP, O LORD!

The morning star is up,
The day has dawned, O Lord,
The sun is rising,
The lotus is opening,
Birds are singing,
The dew-drops are drying,
Devotees are waiting,
Please wake up, O Narayana!
And bless us.
Just as the lion comes out,
From its den joyfully,
So also come out, O Lord Hari,
Of Thy bed room,
And direct Thy gaze on us,
We are waiting;
We are longing to behold
Thy effulgent face.
We have come
Pure in heart
To Thy holy presence;
We stand before your sanctorum:
We are servitors.
Glory unto Thy feet!
We adore Thee this early dawn;
Grant us faith and devotion:
Let our minds be attached
To Thy lotus feet,
Let us serve Thee for ever.

INCOMPARABLE HARI

I seek refuge in Lord Hari
By whom the world is created,
In whom it dissolves;
Who is the first cause,
Who is the greatest Lord;
Who has no beginning, middle or end,
Who is Himself all,

Who is self-born.
Lord Hari is incomparable,
Even the Vedas cannot fathom Him;
In wisdom He is the father of Brihaspati;
In wealth He is the husband of Lakshmi;
In beauty He is the creator of Cupid;
In rulership He is the Lord of the Three worlds;
In power He is the Lord of Indra;
In brilliance He is the Sun of suns;
In preceptorship He is the world's first Guru;
In heroism He is a terror of the Asuras;
In peace He is the Lord of the Rishis;
In purity He is the creator of Ganges;
In godliness He is the God of gods;
In love He is the source of Radha;
In perfection He is Perfection itself;
In freedom He is the Mukti-Dhama itself;
In independence He is the Kaivalya Pada itself.
Glory to Hari, the Lord of Lords!

IT IS ALL THY GRACE

O Madhava! O Keshava,
By the sword of Thy grace
I have cut off all my bonds;
I am free, I am blissful,
All desires have disappeared.
Now I aspire for nothing
But Thy blessed feet;
I have lost my thoughts
In Thee, O Narayana.
Thou hast cut the chains
Of my Sanchita Karma.
Thy grace has saved me.
Thou hast enthroned Thyself
In my heart now;
All my fears have vanished.
Thou hast entered into me
And possessed my entire being.

I have not done
Any hard and long *Tapas*
For such a great blessing.
I have not practised
Panchagni Tapas
Or *Chandrayana Vrata.*
I have not served devotees,
I have not done *Tirtha Yatra.*
Crores of prostrations unto Thee,
O Hari, O Narayana,
Hail Divine Grace!

MY KING AND VICEROY

My Lord Hari is the real King;
He is the King of kings;
He is the Viceroy of Viceroys.
I am the servant of this Divine King;
He is the Divine Majesty of Majesties,
He is the Ruler of the Three worlds,
He is the foremost Sovereign,
He is the Emperor of emperors.
Terrestrial Viceroy is selfish,
He is a mortal being;
But my Divine Viceroy
Is Immortal and unselfish.
Earthly Viceroy is the servant of the king;
But my Viceroy is the Master of masters.
Earthly Viceroy will retire
After five years;
But my Viceroy is the Eternal Ruler.
O Hidden Viceroy of Vicer
Salutations unto Thee!
O Giver of boons.
Lover of devotees,
The Light of the world,
The inner Effulgence,
Prostrations unto Thee!
Lift me up from this Samsara.

OBEISANCE TO NARAYANA

I bow to Lord Narayana,
Who witnesses all phenomena,
Who is free from all blemishes,
Who is self-luminous,
Who is the Supreme Soul,
Who presides over all,
Who is an ocean of mercy,
Who is the source of Jiva.

I prostrate to Lord Hari,
Who is the cause of all,
Who has for Himself no cause,
Who brings misery to an end,
Who is salvation itself,
Who is the shelter for all
Who has endless powers,
Who is the source of Vedas.

I salute Mukunda,
Who has Chinmaya body,
Who enlightens the devotees,
Who is the best of all,
Who is Purushottama,
Who is the Consort of Lakshmi,
Who is the Emperor of the three worlds,
Who was compassionate
Towards Gajendra.

O LORD! HEAR MY PRAYER

O Lord Hari All-merciful!
Just hear my humble prayer:
I decided to build
A lovely model city
In my heart,
And to bring Satsanga,
Viveka, devotion, Brahmacharya,
Japa, Kirtan, Prayer,
To dwell there.

But this mind is very mischievous;
I am keeping quiet:
I do not speak a word to him.
He is violently attacking me
Of his own accord;
He is aggressive;
He puts many obstacles
In my sincere attempts.
I raised the four walls
And put four windows;
He came and pulled them down.
Again I built the walls
After putting a strong foundation;
I used cement this time:
Still he broke them down.
Perhaps it may be
War-quality cement;
I cannot help this:
When can I get Portland now?
For everything there is permit;
It is impossible to get permit.
It is at the mercy of some
Who are suffering from piles,
Swelling and elephantiasis head.
This is all Thy Lila—
Lokavattu lila kaivalyam.
He makes a threat to me
That he will bring his whole army
Of hypocrisy, pride, lust.
And kill Satsanga and others,
In the twinkling of an eye—
What shall I do now?
I cannot live without Thy grace!
Save me! Protect me!
Take this mind with Thee:
This is only Thy Maya's product.
Let me remain at ease

And succeed in my attempt.
This time I will use
The best divine cement
R. P. M. Brand—
Rati, Prema and Mahabhava.
Glory unto Thee!
O Adhokshaja!
Protector of three worlds.

THY IMMEASURABLE COMPASSION

O Lord! Thou art the protector
Of the helpless;
Thy compassion is immeasurable.
Thy greatness is beyond comparison.
I am full of defects
And yet you have not picked holes in me;
You have forgiven me,
You have elevated me.
I am a mere child,
I am without intuition,
I am without knowledge,
I am without realisation,
I am without devotion,
And yet you have kept my mind fixed
On Thy lotus feet.
You have showered Thy grace
On this humble soul;
I had Thy wondrous vision,
I was lost in ecstasy.
I was at once transformed,
I was drowned
In divine consciousness,
In the ocean of divine bliss.
Hail Hail O Vishnu!
O Narayana, O Ranga!
O Rama, O Venkatesa!
Salutations unto Thee.

TEMPLE OF MY HEART

O Lord! Who danced
On the five-headed snake;
I have installed Thee
In the temple of my heart.
I worship Thee
With the flowers of Love;
I wash Thy lotus feet
With the tears of Prem;
I light the lamp of devotion
To adore Thee.
My mind melts with love;
Thou hast stolen my heart;
I sing in ecstasy.
Thy feet rest upon my head;
I behold a splendid light;
I experience a vision beatific.
I see Thy charming beauty,
O Honey! O Nectar.
Thou art in my heart
Like a diamond hill,
O Chakrapani—
The holder of disc;
Nothing can equal Thee.
Thy grace is invincible;
Thy Name has saved me;
Thy Name is the greatest treasure.

THY LOTUS FEET

O Padmanabha
I cling to Thy lotus feet;
Thy lotus feet
Scaled the three worlds;
Thy lotus feet crushed
The hood of Kaliyanaga
From Thy lotus feet
Flows the sacred Ganges;
The dust from Thy feet

Purifies the fallen.
O Vasudeva,
I cling to Thy lotus feet—
The feet which Prahlada held,
Which made Dhruva immortal,
Which support the world,
Which quench the fire
Of this dire Samsara.
O Janardhana,
I cling to Thy feet
Which are cool and beautiful,
Which are lotus-like,
Which give shelter
To sincere devotees,
Which are shampooed
By the Goddess Lakshmi.

LET ME BE TULASI

O Lord Hari, O Valiant one!
Thou didst churn the deep ocean.
O Lord of golden hue!
O Nectar! O Effulgence!
O Knowledge's end!
Blue like the clouds,
I prostrate before Thee.
I think of Thee at all times;
Grant me this boon.
O Ranganatha, O Vitthala!
Let me be a pillar of Thy temple.
Let me be a Tulasi or Jasmine
That adorns Thy neck,
Let me be the lucky flute
That you keep at Thy lips,
Let me be Thy Vanamala,
Let me be the road
That leads to Thy temple,
Let me be Thy Koustubha gem
Or Thy anklet or bracelet,

Let me be Thy Makarakundal
Or Thy Kireeta,
Let me be Thy conch,
Mace, disc or lotus,
Let me be the step
In the sanctum-sanctorum.

WHEN SHALL I DANCE IN ECSTASY

O Lord of Lakshmi,
Protector of the three worlds!
I desire neither wealth
Nor pleasure of the senses;
I do not desire
To rule the earth or heaven.
Pleasures of the world
Do not please me.
'Pap' ka 'Bap'
Is that Lobha.
Father of sins
Is that shameful greed.
Earthly beauty
Could not delude me;
I could not find peace
In mundane objects.
The objects of the world
Are eye sores to me;
When shall I dance
In divine ecstasy?
I desire neither heavenly pleasures,
Nor enjoyment of damsels
Like Rambha, Urvasi,
Menaka and others.
Their songs and dance
Shall not attract me.
I do not want to become
Neither a pundit nor a poet,
Neither a professor nor a scientist,
Neither a king nor an emperor;

My heart really goes
To Thy lotus feet.
I cease to live
When I forget Thee.

PARA BHAKTI

Para Bhakti and Jnana
Are one.
In Para Bhakti
There is no ritual;
Neither ringing of bells,
Nor offering of flowers.
A Para Bhakta
Is above ceremonies
And ordinary rules.
He may not visit temples,
He is not a sectarian.
The whole world
Is Visva Brindavan for him;
He sees Krishna everywhere.
His heart is the temple;
He feels himself as Krishna.
Vaidhi Bhakti ends
In Para Bhakti.
Bhakti begins in two
And ends in one;
The will of the devotee
Has now merged
In the Cosmic Will.
The Lord speaks and works
Through the devotee.
The devotee is Lord himself;
He has no separate existence.

PARA PUJA

This world is Visva Brindavan;
This Hridaya is also Brindavan.
I behold Thee everywhere.

Thy face is turned everywhere.
O Lord! Shall I wash
Your Feet with holy water?
The very Ganges flows from Thy feet!
Shall I give You a seat?
Thou art all-pervading!
Shall I wave lights for Thee?
Sun and Moon are Thy eyes!
Shall I offer flowers to Thee?
Thou art the essence of flowers!
Shall I offer Prasad to Thee?
Thou art the essence of the food!
Shall I offer cloth to Thee?
The sky is Thy garment!
Shall I offer some gold?
Thou art the husband of Lakshmi!
Shall I play music for Thee?
Thou art Sabda Brahman itself;
Thou art Raga and Ragini;
Thou art Saptasvara;
Thou art Anahat Music!

NARAYANA IS ALL

I bow down to Narayana,
I always worship Narayana,
I utter the Name of Narayana,
I remember Narayana,
I sing Narayana,
I praise Narayana,
I serve Narayana,
I meditate on Narayana.

Narayana is my refuge,
Narayana is my life,
Narayana is my all,
Narayana is my goal,
Narayana is my centre,
Narayana is my ideal,

Narayana is my soul,
Narayana is my solace,
Narayana is the five elements,
Narayana is the mind,
Narayana is the Prana,
Narayana is Brahman,
Narayana is Indra,
Narayana is this world,
Narayana is Siva.

NINDA STUTI*

LORD SIVA

1. O Lord! What boons can you give me,
Thyself being a pauper with a begging bowl,
Going from house to house to beg your daily food;
Seeing Thee at a distance, each cries "Lo! our
food is finished."
With depicted misery and hunger writ on your face,
You walk and wend your weary way in this
wealthy world,
With none to feed you or your family,
How can I expect gifts from one so low and abject?

2. Whenever I come to Thee for offering my praises,
The bull in front nods its horns to plunge them in me,
The venomous snake hissing fire keeps me away,
The Ganges at the top, sprouts its coldest driblets on me,
The filthy smell of bones and sharp Trisul
turn me out sick with fear,
The tiger and elephant skins bespeak your forest-life,
Who will come and praise Thee as their Lord God
And sing Thy glories of which you have none?

3. People have sung of Thine extreme feebleness
That one gave a hit on your back with his bow-stick,

*Ninda Stuti is also a kind of sincere prayer from ardent devotees expressing their highest form of devotion to the Lord as a result of friendly relations with Him.

Another used his cane with unerring aim on your limbs,
A third kicked you with his sandal-decked foot,
A fourth hit you with stones from a distance,
All these were emboldened in their acts of scant
respect.
Because Thou hast neither father nor mother
Who will come to your rescue and punish the
slighters?

LORD MURUGA

1. Hey Muruga! Thou art the most cruel and
hot-headed monster,
Because thou did not suck the milk of
one single mother
But grew up in the milk of six mothers,
And thus developed aristocrat heads, deaf to prayers
Of Bhaktas like me poor in strength, wealth and joy,
With petitions manifold and diverse, ever and anon,
But return despondent, mortification writ large,
All due to Thine cruel heart and puffed-up pride.

2. How can I expect nobility and softness with Thee?
Thou art born in a family of worst destitution.
Thine father lives in burning *ghats*.
Thine mother is the worst juggler in
heavens and earth,
Thine uncle is the worst thief and vagabond,
Thine brother is a swell-headed and
pot-bellied glutton.
How can I expect mercy, kindness and
protection from Thee?

3. People blindly say of Thee as the crest-jewel
of all worlds,
Both here and hereafter; how can I believe them
When my experience belies the truth of their praises?
Thou art proclaimed as the destroyer of
Asuras of yore.

But I find Thee withholding protection for me
in sorrows
Or silent of encouragement of future help.
Teach me the language used in your praise
And find out the meaning of the holy word,
Which Thou Thyself imparted to Thine father Siva.
Om Namah Saravanabhavaya.

O LORD OF VENKATA HILL

O Lord of Venkata Hill—
Tirupati or Balaji!
O Seven Hill Ranga!
Thou art seated at the top
Of this sacred Hill;
Thou art beyond
The seven planes and *Sapta-dhatus.*
And the seven *Chakras.*
When the Hundi is not full,
The temple priest ties Thy feet,
With the golden chain;
Lo! Thy Hundi becomes full at once.
I will also tie Thy feet now,
Not with the golden chain,
But with the chain of Love.
How can you escape now?
Please show Thy omnipotence now.
Thou art bound by love;
Thou art Bhaktavatsala,
Thou art Bhaktapriya,
Thou art Patitapavana;
Enthrone Thyself in my heart
And live with me for ever—
This is my fervent prayer.

LORD KRISHNA

Hey Mukunda! Thou art hypocrisy personified.
How can I have reliance on Thy word?
Thou preachest renunciation of wealth and women;

But yet Thou Thyself wearest the Kaustubha jewel
and Lakshmi.
Is this Thine precept by example?
Can anybody have faith in Thine teachings?
Oh! tell me, I am much worried over the
true meaning
Of what You talk and how You act.

2. Hey Mukunda! Thou Thyself livest in
coils of death;
Why have You chosen the bed of
fire vomiting snake?
How can You confer freedom to Thine Bhaktas?
Can't You with Your wealth purchase soft and
snow-white beddings?
Thine Bhaktas feel terrible fear at sight of the snake.
Thou art a bankrupt devoid of servants,
palace and kingship,
With ocean saltish water as Thine residence;
Who will serve Thee and on whom You hold sway?
Will fishes and water-animals serve Thee
or obey Thee?

3. Hey Mukunda! Thou art the worst thief
and law-breaker
Stealing the butter from the pots of shepherds
absent from home;
And dallying with wives of men, unknown to them;
Singing on the flute and dancing with them
in lone forests.
These, Thine acrobats never enhance Thee
in men's estimate.
But yet You preach that all praises are
due to Thee alone.
And men should remember Thee at all times during
work and sacrifice their all to Thee alone.

COME QUICK, O LORD!

O Lord! Thou art silent;
I cried in my distress,
I sought Thy shelter,
I knocked at Thy door,
There is no response.
Why art Thou so cruel?
I cannot bear anymore
The sufferings and afflictions;
My heart will break.
Pundits only say
Thou art Karunasasgar,
Karunanidhan, Karunasindhu;
Thou art cruel,
Where is Thy mercy now?
Is that ocean dried up now?
Or have you become a miser?
Can you not spare a drop for me?
Why have you not shown
Mercy on me?
Has Thy heart become stony now?
Have you become deaf now?
I will accuse Thee now,
Keep up Thy prestige,
Give me Darshan at once,
Shower Thy grace on me.
I will call Thee a serpent
Because you also live on air,
You absorb the Prana of devotees:
Come quick, O Lord!
I am waiting and waiting.

RAMA BHAKTA-KRISHNA BHAKTA SAMVAD

Rama Bhakta:

My Sri Rama is great Dayalu;
He is more benevolent
Than your Lord Krishna.
He goes to the houses of devotees

And blesses them
At their very threshold.
You will not find this quality
In your Lord Krishna.
He went to Gautama Ashram
And blessed Ahalya;
He marched to Sabari's cottage
And blessed her.

Krishna Bhakta:

Sri Rama's devotees have to wait
For their salvation a long time;
They lose their patience;
It is very tiring indeed—
Sabari and Ahalya
Waited for hundreds of years.
But my Sri Krishna is very quick.
In saving His devotees;
He ran with bare foot
To save Gajendra;
He does not make any delay.
He heard the cry of Draupadi;
He at once gave her clothing.
He met *Kubja* on the road
And removed her hunchback.
He marched quickly to blind Sudras
And guided him with his stick.
He saved Dhamaji and Narsi;
He paid Narsi's Hundi:
He paid the money to Nawab
And rescued Dhamaji.
He gave Mukti to Pootana,
Trinavarta and other Asuras
In a minute.
You cannot find these qualities
In your Rama.

RADHA TO KRISHNA

I

O Hari! O Hari! Get out;
O Madhava! Get out;
O Kesava! Do not tell lies,
Do not deceive us.
O Lotus-eyed! Go after her,
Who removes your worries;
How dare you speak even now
Of the unity of Thy body
With that of mine?

II

O Krishna! Like the outer
Your inner (the mind) must be dirtier still;
What makes you deceive
All those devoted to you,
Who are already suffering
From the fever pangs
Of Cupid's sharp arrows?

III

You are ever wandering;
You are hunting after ladies in woods.
What wonder is there,
Even in your childhood
You were cruel enough
To kill ladies like Pootana?

IV

O Krishna! In this Goloka
There are many sweet-hearts,
Devoted to you like me;
Please go to them:
Why do you come to me?
Your dearest Vraja
Has taken the form of a river,
As she is afraid of me;
Construct a temple on her bank

And stay there only;
You also can take the form
Of a river.

V

O Krishna! The Lord of Vraja,
Please leave me,
Get out of this place.
Thou art a thief
For enjoying pleasures
Thou art wicked and cruel;
What makes you cause
All these sufferings to me?
Go after Padmavati,
Or go to Ratnamala or Manorama,
O Lord of Lords, O Guru of Gurus;
I know you fully well:
Please get out of my Ashram.
You are a deceiver;
Your nature is like that
Of a worldly man:
Therefore take the form of a man,
Leave this Goloka
And take your birth in Vraja.
O Susila, Sasikala,
Padmavati and Madhavi!
Allow him not to come in.
He is wicked,
What is the use of his coming here?

COWHERDS TO KRISHNA

I

In play there is no question of Lordship.
O Krishna! You have lost the game;
And Sudama has won it.
Why should you be displeased?
You are in no way superior to us
Either in caste or clan;

We are not living
Under your sovereignty.
Do you want to show your power,
Simply because you have some more cows?
We are not going to play with one
Who feels discontented or displeased.

II

O Krishna! Take your cows away;
We cannot pull on together in this way.
You have ten more cows,
What of that, to us?
We are neither servants to Nanda,
Nor we take you as our Lord or Master.
You always sleep soundly;
You think we are here
To look after your cows.
At times you are on the Kadamba tree—
You order us to look after the cows.

CROOKED KRISHNA

Krishna's pose is crooked,
He is Tribhangi;
His ways are crooked,
His nature is crooked,
His actions are crooked,
His flute is crooked,
Jamuna is crooked,
The lanes of Brindavan
Are crooked,
Everything is crooked.
He is a crooked statesman,
He breaks His promise;
He used the wheel
As His discus.
He blows the conch,
When "Kunjaraha" is uttered.
He takes the form of a gardener

To deceive Duryodhana.
He takes Rukmini forcibly.
He steals butter;
He hides the clothes of the Gopis;
He will act any part.
He will drive the chariot,
He will sing and dance,
He will play hide and seek,
He will enchant the Gopis.
He is above crookedness,
He is the Supreme Lord;
It is difficult,
To understand Him.

RAMBLES IN BHAKTI

TO TONGUE

O Tongue!
Recite, recite at all times,
Om Namo Narayanaya;
You will be blessed.
Names of Lord Vishnu
Put an end
To the miseries of Samsara.
Sing the Names of Hari,
Sing His praise;
You were leading all along
A despicable life.
You lived in vain.
Do not abuse anybody,
Do not utter falsehood.
Do not speak foul words,
Do not utter harsh words.
Speak sweetly
Do not backbite.
Recite Ramayana,
Recite Gita, Upanishads.
Glorify others.

Remember the Lord
Who gave you power to speak.
Do not misuse your power.
Merge in the Lord,
Be ever blissful.

TO CUPID

O Cupid! You are finished now,
Get away from me,
You cannot tempt me,
You cannot excite me,
Your power has gone now,
You are impotent,
Do you not know the power
Of Lord Hari's discus?
Sage Durvasa had to fly,
He had no strength,
To face Vishnu's discus.
I am under his protection;
His discus will burn you:
You are already limbless—
Siva's third eye burnt you once.
Take to your heels quickly,
Become wise.
Thou art Avidya's child;
Go back to your mother.
Viveka and Vairagya,
Devotion and Name,
Will reduce you to ashes.
Show not thy face,
Put down thy flowery arrows,
Seek refuge under Hari's feet.

BOOK THREE

SANKIRTAN YOGA

SANKIRTAN PURIFIES AND NOURISHES

If you ask a man "Are you doing worship daily? Are you regular in doing Japa, Kirtan and meditation?" he gives the answer "My dear sir, what shall I do? I cannot get now good rice or wheat flour, vegetables, ghee and milk. The price of food stuff is considerably high. The food-stuffs are adulterated. I am starving. I am weak. I cannot do any worship or meditation." He puts the whole blame on food.

Food says "Do not blame me sir. My condition entirely depends upon rain. There is no good rain in these days. Hence the production of food is very little and meagre. You will have to blame the rain. If there is abundant rain there will be plenty of food."

Rain says "Do not blame me. My life depends upon Agni or fire. Refer the matter to Agni who is my Lord."

Agni says "Do not blame me. People do not perform sacrifices or Homa or Havan. A few Agnihotris perform Havan in a half-hearted manner without sufficient ghee and materials. Millions of people perform their own Agnihotra in their own way. They smoke cigars and cigarettes ceaselessly and pollute the atmosphere. Even there are cigarette-girls and cigarette-boys. As soon as they get up from their bed they start Agnihotra as the first thing in the morning and taint the air with their puffs of smoke. Horrible! Shameful! It is their first worship of the Lord. How can you expect good rain and good food? People are degenerated. No Sandhya, no recitation of Gayatri, no Kirtan, no Japa. They eat, drink, smoke, sleep. That is all.

The day closes. Life ends. Refer the matter to Vayu or air, my Lord. I am born of Vayu only. If the atmosphere is rendered pure by Havan there will be good rain and abundant food."

Vayu says "You will have to refer the matter to Akasa, my lord. I am born of Akasa. His property is sound. If Akasa is pure, I will also be pure and will direct Agni to bring forth abundant rain."

Akasa says "Doubtless I am the source or womb for the four Tattvas Vayu, Agni, water and earth. I generate sound. People have polluted me by using horrible vulgar words. Even children utter foul words when they are playing. Parents teach them to use vulgar words. They are their Gurus. Children imitate them. People do not do Kirtan regularly. If all do Kirtan daily the whole atmosphere will be purified. There will be abundant rain and abundant crops. In olden days there was Kirtan in every house, and so there were good rains and good food. Even this little food on earth is due to the Kirtan done by some devotees. Had it not been for this the whole world would have perished by this time on account of severe famine. If you really want peace and plenty do Kirtan, purify the atmosphere and propitiate Lord Hari. Sankirtan is the bestower of eternal bliss, immortality and abundant food which helps a man to do his worship, meditation and attain the goal of life."

O man! Give up at once this vulgar smoking. Do not pollute the atmosphere by uttering vulgar words and smoking. Utter always Sri Ram, Hari Om. Train your children also in this direction. Do Kirtan regularly in your house with your children and all members of the family and in the temple, Mutts, and town halls and enjoy the bliss of the Eternal.

VARIETY OF KIRTAN

Sankirtan Yoga can be practised by sincere devotees

and earnest Sadhakas after God-realisation in a variety of ways. Just as we take delight in preparing various kinds of dishes out of one and the same vegetable and relish their tastes immensely in each of the preparations individually, even so devotees sing in ecstasy the blessed Names of the Lord and enjoy the unparalleled spiritual bliss. Mind is a peculiar combination of various kinds of moods, temperaments, whims, fancies and sentiments. It is a strange mixture of various sentiments, emotions, etc., that is known in this world. Therefore the Rishis of yore have designed various methods to control the mind. Control of the mind forms the most important and major item of spiritual Sadhana in the path of God-realisation.

Bhakti Yoga and specially Sankirtan being the easiest, surest and quickest means of God-realisation it is worthwhile giving very careful attention and earnestness in its practice and hence details will be of great help to Sadhakas in this direction. Of the various methods of Sankirtan we have the following varieties.

People of different communities, localities and provinces conduct Kirtan in their own usual and established manner. For example there is Sankirtan prevalent in Latvia, a description of which is given elsewhere in this book. Srimati Anna Plaudis of Riga is a great Sankirtan enthusiast in Latvia and through her we know something of Latvian Sankirtan which the members of the Divine Life Society at Latvia also practise. In South India they have what is called 'Divya Nama Kirtan.' Maharastrians, Bengalis, Gujaratis, Biharis, etc., have their own ways of conducting Sankirtans in their places.

Some of the most important and existing modes of Sankirtan are 1. Akhanda Kirtan, 2. Prabhata Kirtan, 3. Prabhat Pheri, 4. Nagar Kirtan, 5. Boat Kirtan, 6. Lorry Kirtan, 7. Kirtan on elephant back, 8. Party Kirtan, 9. Nama Kirtan, 10. Gunanuvad, 11. Yas Kirtan, 12. Naradiya Kirtan, 13. Lila Kirtan, etc. Thus Sankirtan can be done in

a variety of ways to suit the temperament, time and place. Sankirtan can be done without any restriction to its time and place. Not only Bhaktas, even Vedantins can do Sankirtan and we have Vedantic Kirtans. The attributes of the Nirguna Brahman are described by means of attractive Kirtans.

Generally Sankirtan is conducted in temples, houses etc. Devotees join together at sunset in temples or they keep a photo of the Lord in a hall, decorate it with flowers etc., and seat themselves in front of the picture in two rows facing one another.

In the beginning Omkar or Pranava is chanted loudly in chorus by all the devotees three times. Then Ganesa and Guru Kirtans are sung. One of the devotees sings the Names of the Lord melodiously and others follow him next. This method ensures more attention, harmony and uniformity. This preliminary Kirtan consisting of Ganesa and Guru Kirtan lasts for about five minutes. Next the Maha Mantra or Kalisantarana Upanishad Mantra, 'Hare Rama, Hare Rama...' is repeated for nearly 10 minutes. Then the turn comes for all other devotees too to sing and lead the Kirtan individually. They sing for a definite period and it is beneficial to keep 5 to 10 minutes as the minimum time. When all the devotees have sung Kirtan the Kirtan is concluded with Jayajayakaras, prayer for world peace and repetition of Santi-Mantra 'Purnamadah Purnamidam' etc. In the end there should be common meditation for a few minutes. There should be also Arati to the Lord's picture and distribution of the sacred Prasad.

Next comes Akhanda Kirtan a detailed description of which is given in the book "Bhakti and Sankirtan."

Sankirtan is conducted in the early morning hours also. The devotees leave their beds at 4 a.m., wash their faces, teeth etc. They also take a bath if convenient and then sit for Sankirtan. They keep their Ishtadevata in front of them and do Kirtan as mentioned above. Before the

starting of Kirtan they repeat certain sacred hymns to Sadguru, Lord Vishnu, Sarasvati and others. This is called Prabhata Kirtan. When Prabhata Kirtan is concluded the devotees start the Prabhata Pheri. Pheri means going round and Prabhata Pheri means going round in the morning doing Sankirtan of God's Names in a batch. Generally Prabhata Pheri is conducted before sunrise. It is done as the first item of the programme in all spiritual congregations and assemblies like Sankirtan Sammelan, Sadhana Weeks etc. This serves to make the people know of the forthcoming congregation.

The philosophy behind Prabhata Pheri is this. The people of the locality who are not in the habit of getting up before sunrise will develop the habit of waking before sunrise, in the Brahmamuhurta. They will hear the Names of the Lord chanted as soon as they get up which purify the inner impurities of mind. The effect of the Prabhata Pheri Kirtan is beyond description. It generates a divine current in the whole Mohalla or town. There will be peace, joy, and ecstasy in the minds of all those who sing and hear.

NAGAR KIRTAN: This is generally done in the evening after 4 p.m. It can be conducted in the morning also. Here the group of devotees start from a particular place with harmonium, Kartals, and other instruments of music. After Ganesa Kirtan, Guru Kirtan and Mahamantra Kirtan the devotees sing various other Sankirtan Dhvanis. Nagar Kirtan can be done without instruments also. This is more effective. The pure vibrations of the Lord's Names will not be tainted by the instrumental sounds in the middle. The devotees go round the town and return to the place where they started and do Arati to the Lord with great zeal.

Nagar Kirtan is conducted on Purnima, Ekadasi and other days sacred to the devotees like Ramanavami, Janmashtami, Sivaratri etc. In South India Nagar Kirtan is conducted in many places at night with grand illumination.

In the month of December Nagar Kirtan is conducted daily in Brahmamuhurta. This is sacred to the Bhaktas. The month of Margasirsha is very sacred according to Srimad Bhagavad-Gita, which says, "*Masanam Margasirshoham*—I am the month of Margasirsha among months."

BOAT KIRTAN: This is done in places like Haridwar, Rishikesh, Brindavan, Ayodhya etc., where there are sacred rivers. Devotees sit in a boat with a nicely decorated picture of the Lord kept in the centre. The Kirtan begins and the boat moves slowly from place to place. Sometimes the devotees spend 12 hours or 24 hours in river doing Kirtan. In Rishikesh the Boat Kirtan is conducted during Sadhana weeks. Sometimes the Kirtan continues even for 3 days. The spiritual benefit derived through a Boat Kirtan is beyond description. Even atheists will have faith in God if they do Boat Kirtan. Pilgrims while crossing the Ganges during Mela times and on ordinary days also, sing the Lord's Names in sweet tunes. This fills the air with pure spiritual vibration at all times.

LORRY KIRTAN: To disseminate the knowledge of Bhakti and Sankirtan the best way and most potent means is lorry Kirtan. It helps Sankirtan propagandists very much. This is the easiest and quickest means of spreading Sankirtan in all places. Here the party of Kirtanists move in motor lorry from place to place.

KIRTAN ON ELEPHANT BACK: This method of Kirtan is prevalent in U.P. more than any other place. The picture of the Lord is well decorated and mounted on an elephant's back. Some devotees sit on the elephant. A huge party of Sankirtanists with Kartals etc., accompany the elephant all the while singing the Names of the Lord in chorus. The Names of the Lord are written on big cloths, paper or inscribed on metal plates. The devotees hold them aloft and walk before the procession. Spiritual teachings and laconic sayings of the Vedas and of saints and Rishis are also written on boards and exhibited to the public

during Melas and religious fairs. They produce deep and indelible impressions in the minds of those who happen to see them. But what do you find in these days? There is much noise and fuss everywhere. You see pompous advertisements of 'Dongre's Balamrit,' 'Melin's food' etc. It is really lamentable indeed.

PARTY KIRTAN: The devotees arrange themselves in two sections or batches. before starting the Kirtan. One party sings in chorus and the other batch follows them in chorus. They do Kirtan alternatively. There is a big and mighty spiritual vibration when party Kirtans are held in masses. There is a silent competition between the parties. Each one tries to excel the other in tune. There is great concentration in this method of doing Kirtan. The mind is easily merged in the Lord and Bhava Samadhi ensues for a sincere Bhakta.

NAMA KIRTAN: In Nama Kirtan there is repetition of mere Names of the Lord. Various Names of the Lord are composed in a particular way and sung melodiously. This is a special Sadhana by itself. Akhanda Kirtan or Nama Kirtan is highly purifying. The mind is easily elevated.

GUNANUVAD: In Gunanuvad there is description of the glorious deeds of the Lord in His various incarnations. Side by side Kirtans are also conducted. This is also called Harikathakalakshepam in South India.

YAS KIRTAN: In Yas Kirtan the devotees sing the praises of the Lord in a variety of ways. They recall His various kind acts where he helped devotees like Dhruva, Prahlada and others.

NARADIYA KIRTAN: The Divine Sage Narada, the Chiranjivi roams about in all the three worlds singing "Sriman Narayana Narayana Narayana" even today. Devotees who have strong faith and devotion and yearn for His Darshan can do this Kirtan and get the blessings of Rishi Narada.

LILA KIRTAN: This is prevalent mostly in the Punjab and U.P. Young boys and girls enact the life of Sri Krishna and Lord Rama in public. Lila Kirtan if enacted by devotees with faith and devotion the Lord is highly pleased and the persons who witness the Kirtan will derive immense benefits thereby. If the Lila Kirtan is not directed and controlled by a saintly personality there may arise corruption. Kindly go through the article "Canker in Sankirtan" in "Bhakti and Sankirtan."

DIVYA NAMA KIRTAN

Salutations to the Sat-Chit-Ananda Para Brahman, the All-pervading, the Bhaktatma, who dwells there where His Glories and Names are sung by the devoted Sankirtanists.

Sankirtan is one of the nine modes of Bhakti. It has been developed in various ways at various places. Here an attempt is made to describe as to how Sankirtan has been developed in South India, with special reference to Divya Nama Sankirtan.

Sankirtan (or Bhajan) begins with 'Jayajayakaras' and Slokas or verses on the glory of the Lord's Names and the glory of Sankirtan.

After a few songs and Namavalis, the blessings of Sri Guru are invoked, and then, one by one, of the various Deities. For instance, after Slokas, songs and Namavalis of Sri Guru, comes Anjaneya Kirtan, then some portion of the famous Gita Govinda (popularly known as Asthapadi, as each piece of it contains eight Padas or verses; the Gita Govinda contains 24 such pieces, Slokas occurring in between the pieces) of Sri Jayadeva. The Gita Govinda is full of Madhurya Rasa and fully reflects the Sakhya Bhava and Dasya Bhava. After this, the songs of Sri Narayana Tirtha (known popularly as Tarangam) are sung. The Tarangams of Narayana Tirtha are full of devotional-Vedantic type songs. The Tarangam is followed by songs of Kabir, Mirabai, Surdas, Tulasidas, Saint Tyagaraja. Then

are sung Slokas and songs in praise of Sri Ganesa, Sri Sarasvati Devi, Sri Subramanya, Lord Siva and Panduranga. 'Glory of Sadhus' is an important item in the South Indian Kirtan. And then the All-Pervading Lord is invoked by the following song:

"Ehi Tata Sri Vasudeva, Ehi Pahi Gopijanavallabha,
Dehi Devamudam, Ambujanabha. (Ehi Tata)
Vrajayuvatee-hridayambuja-bhaskara
Vijayagopalayati Mohanarupa. (Ehi Tata)"

Meaning: Come on Father, O Lord Vasudeva, O Beloved of Gopis, Come, Protect us, etc., etc.

(Note: The word Tata also means 'O Dear Friend,' 'O my beloved child.')

After having got into this mood or Bhava, the Bhava of a devoted son receiving his Father with great reverence, respect and love, the devotee (the son) offers to his Father, the All-Pervading Lord, Dhupa, Dipa, flowers, Chandana, etc., and offers Prasad.

It is at this moment that Jayajayakaras are done to the Lord and in this mood or Bhava is the Divya Nama Kirtan begun.

Divya Nama Kirtan is known by the popular name of Dipa Pradakshinam (doing Pradakshinam or going round and round a Dipa or Light). A five-faced lamp (known as Kuttuvilakku) is lit up and adorned with flowers, Chandana and Kumkum. It is on this Dipa that the devotee does Avahan of the Lord. The Dipa or light is placed in the centre to symbolise the Light of lights, to give the devotee the Real Light or Knowledge and lead him on from darkness to Light.

To deviate from the trend, Divya Nama Kirtan includes in it all the nine modes of Bhakti, Sravana (hearing the Lilas of the Lord), Smarana (repeating His Names), Kirtan (singing His Lilas), Padasevana (worshipping His feet), Archana (offering flowers), Vandana (prostrations

unto His feet), Dasya (servant Bhava), Sakhya (the Bhava of a friend), Atma-Nivedana (self-surrender).

The All-Pervading Lord assumes various forms to please His devotees. He is a Bhaktatma. Round the Dipa the devotees stand and begin to sing His Names, "Rama Krishna Govinda, Krishna Rama Govinda," etc., etc. As this proceeds further and further, and as the Bhava increases, the devotees go round and round the Dipa, clapping their hands and dancing in joy, suited to the rhythm or trend of the respective songs. It is noteworthy that these Namavalis and Kirtans are sung in different tunes or Ragas.

When the song,

"Ehi Mudam Dehi, Sri Krishna, Krishna,
Mam Pahi Gopala Bala, Krishna, Krishna.
Bhavya Pahi Natanam Kuru, Sri Krishna Krishna.
Balabhadrasahita, Sri Krishna, Krishna," etc., etc.

is sung, one will reach the sublime heights of Bhakti.

It is beyond expression to give a vivid picture of how a Bhakta will feel when he sings this song doing Pradakhshina of the Dipa, clapping his hands and dancing in joy.

Many of the songs contain 'Pahi Mam' and 'Raksha Mam' indicating absolute self-surrender.

It is just about the middle of the Divya Nama Kirtan that the famous Gopika Gitam (of Srimad Bhagavata) is sung. Picture as it does the various Lilas of Lord Krishna, sung by the Gopikas, the song takes one nearer and nearer the Bhava of Atma-Nivedana.

The Gopika Gitam is followed by the songs 'Anganam Anganam,' etc. All the devotees will form a circle by interlocking each other's fingers and rotate around the Dipa. The beauty of this song lies in this that people rotate in the reverse direction at the end of one Padam, a portion of the song. The next song is still more excellent in that the devotees expand the circle bit by

bit (thus forming a bigger and bigger circle) as the song proceeds. This is done in quick succession and the tune and Tala of this particular song is quite consistent with the quick movements.

This is followed by Kolattam, which is really very interesting and thrilling.

Then comes "Churning." This is done in batches of two or three (but in any case not more than three). One man takes hold of another man's left and right palms by his right and left palms and rotate in a circle (around the Dipa) keeping the hands in a horizontal position. The song selected for this purpose is one of Mira Bai, whose devotional songs still inspire each and every one.

After this, the devotees sing various songs on the various Devatas, and after this, a famous song of Sri Narayana Tirtha Swami on Lord Siva is sung. It is "Siva Siva Bhava Saranam." It is at the fag end of this song, just where the words "Ananda Natana Vinoda," comes one of the devotees assumes the pose of Nataraja and dances in ecstasy. It would seem that Lord Nataraja of Tillaiambalam (Sri Chidambaram) Himself is dancing! Such would the Bhava created, such a sphere this song and dance will create.

Then comes the song "Tharo Jagannatha Tharo Hare" which deals with all the ten Avatars of Lord Vishnu. At the end of this song, when Lord Anjaneya is invoked, one of the devotees will assume the pose of Anjaneya and not unoften one of the devotees to please the 'Anjaneya' will put a plantain into 'His' mouth.

The finishing touch to Divya Nama Kirtan, is given by dedicating every one of our actions to Him.

At the end of Divya Nama Kirtan Slokas in praise of the Lord are sung, and the Dipa is lifted from its place by one of the devotees (and as soon as this is done, the Bhaktas will bow to the place where the Dipa was placed) and it will be taken to the place from where it was

brought. The person taking the lamp will walk with rhythmical steps, in conformity with the rhythm of the song selected for this purpose, viz., one of the portions of Gita Govinda of Sri Jayadeva, "Lalita Lavanga Lata Parisilana," in praise of Lord Krishna.

The Lord will be requested by the Bhaktas to go to bed and a song is specially sung for this purpose. And the cock will cry 'kokoko,' to announce that it is early morning (this is actually done by one of the Bhaktas). And all the devotees will sing in the Bhupala tune to rouse up the Lord. *"Kausalya Supraja Rama Purva Sandhya Pravartate; Uttishtha Narasardula Kartavyam Daivamahnikam,"* etc. (this particular Sloka occurs in Srimad Valmiki Ramayana, where Sri Viswamitra wakes up Lord Rama and Lakshmana).

With a Mangalam song and Jayajayakaras, the Divya Nama Kirtan is concluded.

KIRTAN IN BENGAL

I

"Glorified above all, is the chanting of
the various Names of Lord, which cleans
the mirror of Chitta; which extinguishes
the great fire of successive births
and rebirths; which operates like the
moon-beam upon the white lily of spiritual
life of bride Vidya; which swells the ocean
of bliss; which gives the chanter the
fullest enjoyment of that Divine Love at
the utterance of each word and bathes the
mind and senses in Divine Bliss."

—Lord Gauranga.

Bengal is known as the birth-place of Sankirtan. Lord Gauranga was the first man, who pioneered the propagation of Sankirtan Yoga in Bengal, Assam and Orissa during the middle of the fifteenth century. His Kirtans are widely sung there.

There are several kinds of Kirtan in Bengal. Paalaa Kirtan, Shyama Sangit, Parvati and Nama Kirtan are the important ones. Kirtans are generally sung with accompaniments like Khol, Jhal, Vina, Pakhvaj, Mridanga and other musical instruments.

Paalaa Kirtan is the most ancient Kirtan in Bengal. They are written in verse with rhythm. Most of them deal with the life-history of Lord Krishna. They were written by Ramprasad, Chandidas, Vidyapati during the sixteenth century. Paalaa Kirtan is divided into several parts. They are: Balakanda, Yasoda-Gopal, Rasa Lila, Gopiviraha etc. The Vaishnavas sing this Kirtan in chorus on some special occasions. Khol and Jhal are the main accompaniments.

Shyama Sangita or the song of Mother Kali is the special Kirtan for the Saktas, the worshippers of Sakti. They also sing Siva Sangit. These Kirtans are sung only on special occasions.

Recitation of the Names of various Gods and Goddesses and hymns relating to them is called Nama Kirtan. They are generally sung in the evening, after Puja. Parvati Kirtan is another form of Nama Kirtan, sung in different Svaras. Particularly, it is sung in Bhairavi tune in the early morning. It is also sung in Prabhata Pheri. During Arati, they do Nritya with Khol and other musical instruments and sing "Hari Bol."

II

The Sanskrit verb 'Krit' means praising. In the 10th Skanda of the Srimad-Bhagavata is a beautiful description of the Lord's entrance in His 'Lilabhumi' Brindavan:

"Barhapeedam natavaravapuh karnayoh karnikaram
Bibhradvasah kanakakapisam vaijayanteem cha
maalam
Randhran venoradharasudhaya purayan gopivrindair-
Vrindaranyam svapadaramanam pravisad-gitakritih."

The last word 'Kriti' denotes praise and from this is

derived Kirtan which is now commonly known as a certain type and method of melodious singing, particularly singing Lord Krishna's Name and His Lila. Only praising the Name of the Lord and His Lila in melody for the purposes of keeping the flame of Bhakti burning in our hearts can be termed Kirtan.

Santa Tukaram of Maharashtra in one of his Abhangas has charmingly said that as the purifying waters of Jahnavi (Ganga) have come down to the mortal world from the Lord's feet so the flow of Kirtan comes out of the hearts of mortals and reaches the Lord's feet. Both these flows are purifying.

Singing about the Lord is usually known as Bhajan in most parts of India and there is nothing comparable to Kirtan singing of Bengal outside the province.

Kirtan can be classified under two heads: 1. Namakirtan and 2. Lilakirtan or Rasakirtan. Singing the Names of the Lord in melody is named Namakirtan. The main Sadhana in the nine kinds of Bhakti is Namakirtan. The influence and utility of this are highly appreciated among the Vaishnavites of Bengal and among all the religious cults of India. They think that the essence of all religions in Kaliyuga is Namasankirtan—*"Kalau Namasankirtanat."* Singing Lord Hari's Name aloud is Sankirtan. From this Prema blossoms out and a devotee forgets the existence of the outer world while he sincerely sings the Name of the Lord. This is called Avesha. A Bhakta attains Samadhi by singing the Lord's Names just as a Yogi does through Yoga Sadhana. The primary aim of Namasankirtan is to attain Prema and the main aim of Vaishnava cult is to generate this Prema. It is said that when Lord Chaitanya used to do Namasankirtan dipped in Prema thousands accompanied him.

Such singing is done according to the appropriate Ragas and Raginis of the hours of the day and night, e.g., in the morning hours in Bhairavi, in the noon in

'Bagasree,' in the evening in 'Purbi,' or 'Yaman Kalyan,' in the night in 'Behag.'

Mass singing in such style and compass when the singer and the audience both calling the Lord with tears rolling down their cheeks is characteristic of Bengali Kirtan and such examples are rare except in Indian music.

Namaskarakirtan is usually singing the Lord's Name, e.g., 'Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare; Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.' But as the Vaishnavites of Bengal believe Sri Chaitanya as an incarnation of the Lord they sometimes sing 'Sri Krishna Chaitanya Prabhu Nityananda, Hare Krishna Hare Rama Sri Radhe Govinda' or 'Nitai Gour Radhe Shyam, Hare Krishna Hare Ram.' Lord Sri Chaitanya and Nityananda deluged Bengal with Prem by Namasankirtan; hence they are known as the fathers of Sankirtan. The greatest among the teachings of Lord Chaitanya is: *"Satye yad dhyayato vishnum tretayam yajato makhaih; Dvapare paricharyayam kalau tad harikirtanat."*

When the mind is attracted towards the Lord the heart experiences a selfless, blissful state and this is called Rati. When this Rati gets a greater hold it is termed as Prema. The devotee does not wish for Moksha because even asking for or wanting Moksha is a type of Vasana and selfishness. When Bhagavan is the only object of attainment what else can be desired? The utility of Namasankirtan is the purification of the heart and it is both the method and the goal as the Name and the named are one and the same.

The doings at different periods and in different circumstances and ways of Lord Krishna are termed Lila. Any song composed and sung on such Lila is known as Lilakirtan or Rasakirtan. Some are fond of Namasankirtan and others of Lilakirtan. It is ascribed to Lord Gauranga that Lilarasa should be tasted in the company of very intimates whereas Harinama Sankirtan should be preached and practised among general companies, lest those who are not

deeply immersed in Krishna Bhakti misunderstand or misconstrue the significance of the Lord's Lila. But it is difficult to judge the attainments of general companies. If the Lord's Name gives one pleasure it is but natural. Singing Lord's qualities and about His Lilas should also give him equal pleasure. Whatever overfloods the heart wih bliss is termed Rasa. As hearing of the Lord's doings merges the heart in Ananda or Bliss, Lila Kirtan is otherwise termed Rasakirtan.

There are 64 kinds of Rasa in Kirtan. Sringara is the main Rasa divided into Vipralambha and Sambhoga and each of them is sub-divided into four which in turn are subdivided into eight each.

A Kirtan singer should not only be a good musician but also must be learned, otherwise he may unwittingly offer the audience by Rasabhasa i.e. mixing up on inappropriate Rasas in a Lila.

In the Vaishanavite literature Padavalis which are lyrical poems and songs combined concerning Lord Krishna's Lila have a very high place and generally are those which have been composed by Vaishnava Bhaktas and saintly persons like Jayadeva, Chandidas, Vidyapati, Jnanadas, Govindadas and others. In the present age Rabindranath Tagore, Sisir Kumar Ghosh have also made a gift of beautiful Padavalis; but the orthodox school of Vaishnavas in Bengal, though they admire these, do not admit these to be Rasakirtan in the real sense of the term. The excellence and sublimity of Padavalis lie in their power of attuning the mind to real Bhava which is beyond Poesy, Rhyme, Cadence or Tune. It has been said before that the Bhaktas believe that God-consciousness and God's proximity could be felt by singing Kirtan, hence the latter has a distinct and definite place in spirituality. If judged from the literary standpoint Padavalis are lyrics, from the musical viewpoint these are Kirtans in the original sense of the term as

explained in the beginning of this article, and from the spiritual standard these are Bhajans of Bhagavan.

There are five primary Rasas acknowledged by the Bhaktas, over and above the usually known nine Rasas. These five are: 1. Santa (equilibrium), 2. Dasya (service), 3. Sakhya (intimacy, friendship), 4. Vatsalya (filial affection) and 5. Madhurya (love, sauve). Out of these the first one is more appropriate for the Yogis and the rest four are very dear to the Bhaktas according to taste and inclination.

Principally Padavalis are based on the Lila of Lord Krishna. His Bhajan had been in vogue from earlier times, but Lord Sri Chaitanya placed Krishna Lila on a higher pedestal. Lord Sri Chaitanya's ideal of Prema inspired many poets and they composed many Padas or poetical songs taking as their theme Gouranga Lila. These Padavalis are known as Gourachandrika. In real Kirtan first Gourachandrika has to be sung before Krishna Lila.

The life, character and teachings of Lord Sri Chaitanya are sublime, deep, uplifting and purifying. Volumes like 'Chaitanya Charitamrita,' 'Chaitanya Chandrodaya,' 'Chaitanya Bhagavata,' 'Chaitanya Mangala' testify to this. It is doubtful if anywhere in the world any religious preacher or reformer had been able to generate so much feeling or emotion as the name of Sri Chaitanya has done or is still doing among the Vaishnavites of Bengal. So Padavalis now mean lyrical songs based on the Lila of Radhakrishna as well as Gouranga.

A complete chronological history of Kirtan is not available. The old Archeological ruins of Somapur 'Bihara' in Paharpur in North Bengal is the mute evidence of the fact of the great influence of the then decaying Buddhistic religion having its stronghold in that part of the province. With the lapse of time these Buddhists took to mysterious and secret rituals and cults. The practitioners of these cults are mentioned in Vaishnava literature as Pasandi. More than about 1000 years ago Buddhist Acharyas like Luipad used

to perform something similar to Kirtan. The Bhikkus and Bhikkunis used to do Kirtan in different localities. In Koi Fong Iron Temple in China, built sometime between 900 and 1280 A.D., there is a picture of Kirtan as it is practised in Bengal, an exact replica of Kirtan done in the days of Lord Sri Chaitanya. It is taken for granted that the sweet flow of Kirtan started from the time of Jayadev. It has been said before that Sri Chaitanya and Nityananda are deemed to be the creators of Sankirtan. It is said that Maharaja Gajapati Prataparudra of Puri when he heard Sankirtan, asked his chief courtier 'what music is this?' His courtier Pundit Sarvabhouma Bhattacharya explained that Lord Chaitanya had created this.

It is mentioned in Chaitanya Bhagavata that on his return from Gaya Lord Sri Chaitanya was mad after Harinam. The pupils of his Tole, religious school told him "Lord, we also would like to do Kirtan with you but we do not know how to do it, please teach us." Then Lord Chaitanya sang: *"Haraye Namaha Krishna Yadavaya Namaha, Gopala Govinda Rama Sri Madhusudana,"* in accompaniment with clapping of hands. Thus began Sankirtan in India. He advised that Krishnanam is Mahamantra, and asked everyone to sing *'Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare; Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.'*

Dancing to the accompaniment of musical instruments like Mridanga (a special type of drum), and Mandira (cymbals) are integral parts of Kirtan. It is the practice to begin Kirtan after worshipping Mridanga with sandalwood paste and a garland of flowers. In the state of Manipur where Vaishnavism is in vogue Kirtan starts after Arati of Mridanga (also called Khol) and Mandira (generally known as Kartal). The Kirtania or Kirtan singer is also garlanded before commencement of the function. The Kirtan singer, his party and the whole audience start Gourachandrika while standing and then everyone sits down and the

subsequent portion of Kirtan is performed sitting. In a Kirtan when both the singer and the audience take to dancing enraptured, it is termed Uddanda Kirtan.

There are five schools of Kirtan: 1. The one introduced by Narottamdas, a great Vaishnava Bhakta, resident of a place called Khetri in the Pargana of Garerhat in Rajshahi, is known as 'Garanhati'. 2. In the district of Burdwan from Manoharsahi Pargana came 'Manoharsahi' introduced by Acharya Srinivas and propagated by Jnandas, Balramdas, who were contemporaries of Narottamdas. 3. From Ranihati, also in Burdwan district come 'Reneti' similarly introduced by Acharya Srinivas and subsequently popularised by Vaishnavadas and Uddhavadas. 4. From Mandaran in Midnapore district comes 'Mandarini'. 5. 'Jharkhandi' comes from Jharkand, also situated in Midnapore.

Mandarini, Reneti and Jharkhandi types of Kirtans are more or less out of use now. Garanhati school is now revived by Brajamadhuri Sangha. Manoharsahi is mostly in vogue now.

Upto the middle of the 18th century Kirtan-singing was in a flourishing state in Bengal, but with the advent of Kavigan and Pachaligan, Kirtan suffered a temporary set back in popularity. But it came to be known as Dhap. A very accomplished man by the name of Madhu Sudan Kan born in Jessore, about the middle of the 19th century, composed many Padas on Radha-Krishna Lila and used to go about singing Dhap in company with the male and female members of his family, and though not the originator of this style of Kirtan, he gave it a great push.

In the present times a type of Kirtan is sung known as Dhap Kirtan. This was usually sung by women. During the Sraaddha ceremonies when Brahmins, Pundits, learned scholars and distinguished guests are invited, such Dhap Kirtan used to be sung by some famed songstress. During the course of time, these women singers are gradually

replaced by men. With the advent of men songsters the revival of high class Kirtan is slowly taking place. Names of Rasikdas, Premdas, Ganeshdas are famed but they have passed away. Another name, Ramkamal Bhattacharya hailing from Patna district, took Calcutta by storm by his great powers of Kirtan singing. He had such charm and extraordinary genius that at times where accommodation permitted a gathering of nearly 10,000, audience used to hear him singing with rapt attention in pin-drop silence.

Amongst the old schools, Advaitadas Babajee Pandit was very well-known in his time.

Places like Panchthupi, Moinadal, Sreekhanda, Navadwip, are still famous for Kirtan in Bengal.

In Navadwip every year during a function known as Dhulot, Kirtan parties from different places congregate during the Phalguni Purnima—birth anniversary of Lord Sri Gouranga—and sing Kirtan. During Vaishnava festivals or anniversaries of birthdates or passing away dates of Bhaktas, Kirtan is sung congregationally at places like Santipur, Srikhanda, Jhamatpur, Katwa, Kalna, Kendudilwa, Ran Keli etc.

Kirtan sung at the commemoration ceremonies of Vaishnava Bhaktas, Acharyas and Mahapurushas is known as Suchak Kirtan. Sri Ramdas Babajee excels in this type of Kirtan. It is difficult to explain the actual spontaneous Sattvik Bhavas like tears, bliss, shivering, sweating, which manifest during and in accompaniment with his Kirtan.

There is one particular characteristic in Kirtan which is while singing Padavali Kirtan, a singer, to illustrate, to elucidate or to bring out the latent beauty or hidden meaning of the composition, can and usually does add ornamentation of his own. This is known as Akhar and this usually beautifies the singing and makes Kirtan more attractive.

This is such a vast and deep subject that it is impossible to do justice to Kirtan in such a short article like

this. Only salient points have been culled from the authoritative treatise on the subject written by Rai Bahadur Khagendranath Mitra, to whom acknowledgment and thanks are conveyed herein.

KIRTAN IN MAHARASHTRA

Maharashtra also is celebrated for Kirtan. The spiritual influence of Sri Eknath, Tukaram, Namdev, Jnana Dev etc., the reputed saints of Maharashtra still exists.

It is understood that Maharashtra Kirtan begins with the invocation of the grace of Lord Ganapathi, with Kathak and music interspersed, ending with the recital of some Puranic story.

Maharashtrians do not use harmonium and Tablas. They use Ektar Sitar, Tambura and Kartals and Tepri (wooden pieces). They sing the Names of Lord Krishna or Vitthala or Vitthoba and the Bhajans or Abhangas of Saint Tukaram. They commence with Brahmanirupa or Avahan or Gurustotra and Ganesa Stotra and Bhajan.

They do Nama Saptaha. They have Palki procession also. They tie Gungru to their legs and do Nritya while doing Kirtan either in a circle or in two lines.

Jnana Dev was the founder of an institution called *Warkari Sampradaya* which is still alive in all its glory in Maharashtra. It is called 'Wari' to Pandharapur. All who have accepted this Wari undertake to go to Pandharpur on Ashadh Ekadasi (June-July) and Kartik Ekadasi (October-November) days. They must visit Pandharpur at least once, if not on both these days. It is considered so very sacred that except in the event of physical illness, they continue to go to Pandharpur the whole of life and from generation to generation. Devotees collect together and walk to Pandharpur from their villages. They do Kirtan on the way.

They start the Kirtan with 'Jay Jaya Rama Krishna Hari'. Saint Tukaram had initiation of the Mantra in his dream. In Alandi near Pune they do Akhanda Kirtan of

'Jnanadev and Tukaram.' In Ganigapur Kirtan of Lord Dattatreya is performed.

ARDHA VASA

Before starting Akhanda Kirtan, a ceremony called Ardha Vasa is performed the previous night. A big Mandapa is erected. The Mandapa is decorated with mango leaves, flowers etc. Then the picture of Lord Krishna or Lord Rama is placed on the Simhasana, which is also nicely decorated. Just in front of the picture Vedi (a big pillar) or Tulasi plant is decorated by various pictures of Lord Krishna, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu etc.

The Kirtan is done till mid-night. In the end Puja is done with recitation of Stotras and Arati. Then the Lord goes to sleep by the recitation of Sayana Mantra.

In the early morning, the priest comes and does the Puja. Four Akhanda Dipas are placed in the four corners of the Vedi.

At the end of Akhanda Kirtan the devotees go for Nagar Kirtan, singing the Names of the Lord or Mahamantra in chorus. They come back and do the ceremony called *Dadhi Kandon.* Curd mixed with water and sandal paste is sprinkled by the Darbha grass over the persons. The following song is sung, when the water is sprinkled.

Lord Krishna speaks to Mother Yasoda:

"O Deyya Mayya Makhan Kilade,
Makhan Kilade, Makhan Khilade,
Brindavan Key Kunj Galin Mein,
Dadhi Key Dhoom Machade (O Deyya Mayya...)"

O my Beloved Mother! Please feed me with butter.
O feed me with butter! Feed me with butter!
Let there be a bustling shower of curds,
Everywhere in the busy streets of Brindavan!
(O my Beloved Mother...)

LATVIAN SANKIRTAN

The Latvians from the Baltic Branch of the Indo-European family of nations. Their language is the best proof of their ancient origin. It is akin to Sanskrit. The Latvians have preserved their Aryan strength also in choir-singing which they foster with love. All down the ages the Latvians have created hundreds of thousands of folk-songs and they are the fountain from which they derive their ethical and spiritual outlook on the world. It has been the tradition to mark every event, from the cradle to the grave, by singing collectively in a common place. This is Latvian Sankirtan.

The Latvian folk-songs or 'Dainas' as they are called here, are in verse and rhythm. Although the creation of individual authors, the Dainas reflect the life of the nation in its entirety, and handed down and spreading from generation to generation they have assumed a final aspect which fully portrays the soul of the people. They embrace the animate and inanimate world alike and glorify all the great events of the nation.

The Sankirtan movement in Latvia began to decline owing to some evil causes, but at the present day there is a revival of it. Even the geographical situation of Latvia has not only facilitated the exchange of goods and brought the Latvians into contact with the other countries; it has also taught them to weather many a gale without losing their national individuality. In order to preserve the great spiritual inheritance of the Latvian nation, some patriots have devoted a life-time to collect and study the Dainas.

Despite their great antiquity the Latvian Dainas are recited and sung by the people on appropriate occasions with great reverence and much feeling. In the songs the Latvians find comfort and consolation when times are bad.

The Dainas owe their existence to the love of singing. It is also the source from which arose the tradition of the

Latvian people to arrange song festivals from time to time. They are musical events of a high order, with vast numbers of performers and enormous audience.

In the summer of 1938, on 18th and 19th June, the 'Ninth All-Latvian Song Festival' has been celebrated in Riga, the capital of Latvia. More than 400 choirs comprised of 18,000 singers have participated in this Festival. All the singers and most of the audience were dressed in the national costumes of various districts. Choirs from neighbouring countries, Lithuania, Estonia, have attended this Festival.

In the soul of the Latvians we find vividly envisaged the idea of the universal power of song. Not only does song make life more tolerable, but the spirit of song dispels enmity while the power of song stays arrows and wards off wars. That is why the Latvians hope that the spirit and sound of their song will spread the boundaries of their own country. The song will be the bond uniting the spiritual culture of the nations, and will be the promoter of brotherhood and peace.

KIRTAN AT ANANDA KUTIR*

(Special Feature)

The Sankirtan conducted at Ananda Kutir at nights has its own remarkable special features which will not be found anywhere in India. It is more a class of silent common meditation and Samadhi. It is a Santa type of Sankirtan. It is not a violent type of Sankirtan which you will find in Punjab, U.P., Bengal and other places.

Mridanga, Tabala, Dole, Cymbals, Kartals are not used at all. There is no clapping of hands. Aspirants sit in the meditative pose. One man sings sweetly and gently Namavalis or Dhwanis and the others follow. In other places only some select people lead but at Ananda Kutir the turn comes to everyone. Even ladies, children and

*This article was written in the late 40s.

servants get their turn. Even big officers who feel shy in doing Kirtan are made to do Kirtan.

The opening Kirtans are Ganesa Kirtan, Sarasvati Kirtan, Guru Kirtan, Mahamantra Kirtan, Panchakshara Kirtan Hanuman Kirtan and Gauranga Kirtan. Om is chanted first loudly three times to begin with. As Lord Gauranga revived the Kirtan movement and as his name is ever associated with Sankirtan, Kirtan of his name also is done. Kirtan is no Kirtan if Sri Hanuman is not invoked. Whenever Ramanam is sung, there dwells Hanuman. Hence Hanuman Kirtan also is recited at the beginning. On Fridays there is special Devi Kirtan. On Thursdays there is special Dattatreya Guru Kirtan. On Saturdays there is special Hanuman Kirtan.

The Sankirtan of Ananda Kutir is more a Japa Kirtan. Panchakshara, Ashtakshara, Dvadasakshara, Rama Taraka, Mahavakya, Gita Slokas and Upanishadic Mantras are sung very beautifully. Mahamantra Kirtan is sung in a variety of ways. There is Sanskrit Kirtan. There is Nirguna Kirtan also.

Further the Sankirtan class is also a lecture class. Swamiji's English philosophical songs, Sanskrit songs and Vedantic songs are sung in the interval. This itself forms a lecture. The students give an introduction to the song first which itself is a beautiful lecture. The songs are full of practical spiritual instructions.

Hindi Bhajans are sung in the interval. Occasionally harmonium and Tabala are used on special functions. For Akhanda Kirtan cymbals are used at night to drive out sleepiness.

The recitation of Srisukta, Lakshmi Ashtottara, Samagana and Vedic chanting are thrilling and touching.

Children are specialists in doing lectures and Kirtans.

Sometimes the whole 'Wavelets of Bliss' of Sri Swamiji in English and Tamil tunes is sung.

Swamiji will sing 'Philosophy and Yoga', 'Wisdom Sparks', 'Sangita Lila Yoga', and 'Sangita Bhagavata'. There will be no satiety even if you hear hundreds of times his 'Maya' poem and 'Divine Creeper'.

Sometimes two-party and three-party Kirtan are done. This inspires and arouses many. Chanting Om and Ram is also done in two parties.

On Sundays Aditya Hridayam is recited. On Thursdays Dattatreya Stuti is chanted. On Mondays Sarvalingastava is recited. On Saturdays Sangita Hanuman Chalisa (40 verses) in Hindi is recited. On Ekadasi days Vishnu Sahasranama is recited and Sangita Ramayana in Hindi is sung.

Daily Mahabharata Santi Parva, Upanishads, one chapter of the Gita, Mind—Its Mysteries and Control, Aphorisms, Yoga-Vasishtha are recited. Sometimes dramas 'Radha's Prem', 'Gita Drama' and 'Brahmavidya Vilas' are enacted.

The function closes with common meditation, Arati song 'Jaya Jaya Arati Venugopala', prayer for World-Peace and distribution of Prasad.

MAHARASHTRA KIRTAN DHWANIS

I

In Maharashtra the devotees start their Kirtan with singing "Jaya Jaya Rama Krishna Hari, Jaya Jaya Rama Krishna Hari." 'Jaya Jaya Rama Krishna Hari' is the Mantra which Sri Tukaram received from Lord Krishna in his dream. Further this Mantra is an abbreviated form of the Maha Mantra "Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare."

II

In Alandi near Pune where there is the Samadhi of the reputed Yogi Sri Jnana Dev, people sing throughout the twentyfour hours,'Jnana Dev Tukaram'.

III

Another favourite Kirtan of the Maharashtra devotees is "Jaya Jaya Vittoba Rukmai, Jaya Jaya Vittoba Rukmai." Vittoba or Vittala is another Name for Lord Sri Krishna. Rukmini is the Mother of the Universe. Rukmini is the consort of Lord Sri Krishna.

IV

Another beautiful Kirtan is the combined names of the important saints of Maharashtra:

Thars: Sunaja

Nivrittinath, Jnana Dev, Sopan, Muktabai,
Ekanath, Nama Dev, Tukaram.

Nivrittinath is the elder brother of Jnana Dev, the author of Jnaneshwari Gita. Sopan is another brother of Jnanadev, whose Samadhi is in Satara. Muktabai is the sister of Jnanadev. The three brothers are regarded as the incarnation of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva and Muktabai as the incarnation of Maya. Mysterious is the birth of great souls. Mysterious is their end also.

SELECTED KIRTAN DHWANIS

1. Jaya Ganesa, Jaya Ganesha, Jaya Ganesa, Pahimam
   Sri Ganesa, Sri Ganesa, Sri Ganesa, Rakshamam.

2. Jaya Guru, Siva Guru, Hari Guru Ram
   Jagat Guru, Param Guru, Sat Guru Shyam.
   Adi Guru, Advaita Guru, Ananda Guru Om
   Chid Guru, Chidghana Guru, Chinmaya Guru Om.

3. Saravanabhava, Saravanabhava, Saravanabhava Pahimam
   Subramanya, Subramanya, Subramanya Rakshamam

4. Goura Hari, Goura Hari, Goura Hari, Pahimam
   Gouranga Hari, Gouranga Hari, Gouranga Hari
   Rakshamam.

5. Jaya Sarasvati, Jaya Sarasvati, Jaya Sarasvati, Pahimam
   Sri Sarasvati, Sri Sarasvati, Sri Sarasvati, Rakshamam.

6. Sivaya Nama Om, Sivaya Namah
Sivaya Nama Om, Namah Sivaya.
Siva Siva Siva Siva, Sivaya Namah Om
Bum Bum Bum Bum, Namah Sivaya.
Siva Siva Sankara, Hara Hara Sankara
Jaya Jaya Sankara, Namami Sankara.
Samba Sada Siva, Samba Sada Siva,
Samba Sadasiva, Samba Sivom Hara.
Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namah Sivaya
Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namah Sivaya.

7. Raghupathi Raghava Raja Ram
Patita Pavana Sita Ram,
Jaya Raghu Nandana Jaya Siya Ram
Janaki Vallabha Raja Ram.

8. Achyutam Keshavam Rama Narayanam
Krishna Damodaram Vasudevam Harim,
Sridharam Madhavam, Gopika Vallabham
Janaki Nayakam Ramachandram Bhaje.

9. Jaya Jaga Janani Sankata Harini
Tribhuvana Tarini Mahesvari.

10. Dattatreya Tavasaranam
Dattannatha Bhava Haranam.
Datta Guru Jaya Datta Guru
Poorna Guru Avadhuta Guru.

11. Isvari, Mahesvari, Paramesvari Pahimam
Kamesvari, Mathesvari, Sarvesvari Rakshamam.

12. Dhana Lakshmi, Dhanya Lakshmi, Dhairya Lakshmi,
Pahimam
Vara Lakshmi, Vijaya Lakshmi, Vidya Lakshmi,
Rakshamam
Jaya Lakshmi, Gaja Lakshmi, Pankaja Lakshmi,
Namah Om
Ashta Lakshmi, Maya Lakshmi, Padma Lakshmi,
Sarana Om.

13. Jaya Gange, Jaya Gange Rani
Sri Gange Jaya, Hara Gange.

14. Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya
Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.

15. Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare,
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna
Hare Hare.

EKA SLOKI RAMAYANA

Bala Kanda

Rama Rama Jaya Raja Ram
Rama Rama Jaya Sita Ram

Sri Rama was born — Jaya Jaya Ram
To destroy Ravana — Sita Ram
Rama killed — Jaya Jaya Ram
Tataka, Subahu — Sita Ram
He delivered Ahalya — Jaya Jaya Ram
And married Sita — Sita Ram

Ayodhya Kanda

Kaikeyi Devi — Jaya Jaya Ram
Got boons from Dasaratha — Sita Ram

Aranya Kanda

Rama went — Jaya Jaya Ram
To Dandaka forest — Sita Ram
Ravana came now — Jaya Jaya Ram
And took away Sita — Sita Ram

Kishkindha Kanda

Rama killed Vali — Jaya Jaya Ram
And enthroned Sugriva — Sita Ram

Sundara Kanda

Hanuman crossed the sea — Jaya Jaya Ram
And gave the ring to Sita — Sita Ram
He burnt Lanka — Jaya Jaya Ram
And gave Rama Chudamani — Sita Ram

Yuddha Kanda

Rama killed — Jaya Jaya Ram
Kumbhakarna, Ravana — Sita Ram
Lakshmana killed — Jaya Jaya Ram
The mighty Meghanada — Sita Ram
Rama installed — Jaya Jaya Ram
Vibhishana on the throne — Sita Ram
Then all came back — Jaya Jaya Ram
To Ayodhya city — Sita Ram
Vasishtha installed — Jaya Jaya Ram
Rama on the throne — Sita Ram
He who reads — Jaya Jaya Ram
Eka Sloki Ramayana — Sita Ram
Will attain son, wealth — Jaya Jaya Ram
Bhakti, Mukti — Sita Ram
Rama Rama Jaya Raja Ram
Rama Rama Jaya Sita Ram.

EKA SLOKI BHAGAVATA

Shyam Shyam Jaya — Jaya Jaya Shyam
Shyam Shyam Jaya — Radheshyam
Krishna Krishna Jaya — Jaya Jaya Shyam
Krishna Krishna Jaya — Radheshyam
Om Namo Bhagavate — Jaya Jaya Shyam
Vasudevaya — Radheshyam
Lord Krishna was born — Jaya Jaya Shyam
To destroy Kamsa — Radheshyam
And all other Asuras — Jaya Jaya Shyam
And to establish Dharma — Radheshyam
He killed Pootana — Jaya Jaya Shyam
And Trinavarta, Vatsasura — Radheshyam
He killed also — Jaya Jaya Shyam
Bakasura Aghasura — Radheshyam
He lifted Govardhan — Jaya Jaya Shyam
And did Raslila — Radheshyam
He killed Sankhachuda — Jaya Jaya Shyam
And Kesi and Vyoma — Radheshyam

He made Kubja straight Jaya Jaya Shyam
And killed Kuvalayapeeda Radheshyam
He wrestled with Chanura Jaya Jaya Shyam
And killed him too Radheshyam
He killed Panchajana Jaya Jaya Shyam
And blessed Muchukunda Radheshyam
He married Rukmini Jaya Jaya Shyam
And Satyabhama too Radheshyam
He married also Jaya Jaya Shyam
Kalindi, Mitravinda Radheshyam
He killed Narakasura Jaya Jaya Shyam
And cut Bana's arms Radheshyam
He killed Sisupala Jaya Jaya Shyam
Salva and Dantavakra Radheshyam
He blessed Kuchela Jaya Jaya Shyam
His old friend Radheshyam
He instructed Uddhava Jaya Jaya Shyam
In Bhakti and Jnana Radheshyam
He said to Uddhava Jaya Jaya Shyam
This world is unreal Radheshyam
Look on all beings Jaya Jaya Shyam
With equal eyes Radheshyam
Abandon egoism Jaya Jaya Shyam
Control mind and senses Radheshyam
Discharge your duties Jaya Jaya Shyam
Meditate on the Truth Radheshyam
Fix your mind on Me Jaya Jaya Shyam
Practise Yama, Niyama Radheshyam
Serve the Preceptor Jaya Jaya Shyam
Free yourself from pride Radheshyam
Don't find fault with any Jaya Jaya Shyam
Be indifferent to wealth Radheshyam
Feel that Atman Jaya Jaya Shyam
Is separate from the body Radheshyam
See Brahman everywhere Jaya Jaya Shyam
Remove Dehadhyasa Radheshyam
Do good to all Jaya Jaya Shyam

Take refuge in Me Radheshyam
Do Japa, Kirtan Jaya Jaya Shyam
Meditate on Me Radheshyam
He who studies Jaya Jaya Shyam
Eka Sloki Bhagavata Radheshyam
Will attain peace, wealth Jaya Jaya Shyam
Bhakti, Mukti Radheshyam
Om Namo Bhagavate Jaya Jaya Shyam
Vaasudevaya Radheshyam
Shyam Shyam Jaya Jaya Jaya Shyam
Shyam Shyam Jaya Radheshyam
Krishna Krishna Jaya Jaya Jaya Shyam
Krishna Krishna Jaya Radheshyam

APPENDIX

HARI, RAMA, KRISHNA

1. 'Hari' means one who steals the hearts of Yogis *(Harati Yogichetamsi Iti Harih),* or He who destroys sins, even when remembered by a wicked man, just as fire burns even when it is touched through inadvertence:

Harir-harati papani dushtachittairapi smritah;
Anichhayapi samsprishto dahatyeva hi pavakah.

2. 'Rama' means He in whom the Yogis take delight *(Ramante Yogino'smin-iti Ramah)* or the Supreme Brahman who is Infinite Consciousness and Eternal Bliss, from whom the Yogis derive their pleasure:

Ramante yogino'nante nityanande chidatmani;
Iti ramapadenasau parabrahma vidhiyate.

3. 'Krishna' means one who draws the hearts of Yogis *(Karshati Yogino Mana Iti Krishnah).* Another meaning of Krishna is given in the following verse:

Krishirbhuvachakah sabdo nascha nivrittivachakah;
Tayoraikyam param brahma krishna ityabhidhiyate.

'Krish' means existence, 'Na' means Bliss; so Krishna is the Supreme Brahman in whom both these aspects are combined.

RADHA, THE PERSONIFICATION OF BHAKTI

Salutations to Sri Radha, the World-Mother, who took her birth at Barsana, near Brindavan, who is an embodiment of Sri Krishna Prema!

The Supreme emotion, Mahabhava, is the quintessence of Prema. Radha is the personification of this Supreme emotion. The play of Radha with Sri Krishna is extremely deep; it cannot be learnt from the Dasya, Vatsalya and

other Bhavas. The Sakhis alone are qualified for it. They alone relish this Lila in full. Sakhis or those who worship Sri Krishna in the spirit of His Sakhis have a right to this Lila.

A Sakhi does not yearn to play with Sri Krishna all by herself. She feels a keener delight in contriving Sri Krishna's dalliance with Radha. Radha is indeed the Wishing Creeper, Kalpalata, of the love of Sri Krishna. The Sakhis are the leaves, flowers and shoots of the Creeper. If the nectar of dalliance with Sri Krishna waters the Creeper, the leaves etc., take delight in it million times more than if they themselves had been watered.

The Sakhis do not long for Sri Krishna's embrace, but they exert themselves to make Sri Krishna embrace Radha. They send Sri Krishna to her for this purpose under various pretexts. They attain thereby a bliss million times sweeter than that of selfish enjoyment. The unselfish devotion of these towards each other strengthens the deliciousness, Rasa. The sight of such unselfish, pure Prema pleases Lord Sri Krishna. The love felt by the Gopis is not really earthly lust. Earthly lust seeks sensual gratification for one's own self. The Gopis abandon all idea of self and seek Sri Krishna's enjoyment. They did not yearn for their own pleasure. They embrace Sri Krishna only to please Him.

You cannot attain Sri Krishna, however much you worship Him, if you only meditate on Him as a divinity and not serve Him as a Gopi. See how Lakshmi adored Him, but could not attain Him in Brija.

Radha is a Devi. She is the queen of lustrous beauties or the abode of Sri Krishna's love-sports and worship. She beholds Lord Krishna in anything and everything. She sets her love-lit eyes upon Him. Lord Krishna is the Supreme Matchless Lover and Sri Radha is identical with Him. She is the part and parcel of Krishna and His love-energy. Her sole object of existence and devout prayers is to fulfil the wishes of Sri Krishna. Hence she is named Krishnamayi.

She is full of Krishna inside and outside. Krishna is the charmer of all. Radha is Krishna's charmer and therefore the Supreme Goddess.

She is the worshipped of all the worshipped deities. She is the fosterer and mother of the worlds. She is the presiding deity of the Lakshmis of Vaikuntha or of the six divine attributes of Lord Krishna. She is the seat of concentrated beauties or the source and centre from which the Lakshmis draw their beauties.

Lord Krishna is the embodiment of bliss. He is the source of and centre of real happiness. Bliss is divine elixir that bestows immortality. Sensual pleasure is a poison which causes disease and death. Lord Krishna has a certain energy called Antaranga or Svar:pa Sakti. The Sakti which has the power of giving delight to Krishna and His devotees is called Hladini Sakti or delight-giving energy. The essence of Hladini is Prema or selfless Krishna's Prema. The selfless love is called Ananda-Chinmaya-Rasa. The quintessence of this Rasa or Mahabhava is Radha.

Radha is the embodiment of Mahabhava. The word Radha etymologically means a devotee. Radha is the Chief of Krishna's sweethearts. All the Lakshmis of Vaikuntha are her Vilasa-Murtis. The queens of Dvaraka are her reflections. Lalita and other Gopis of Brindavan are her manifold forms. She pervades the Gopis in her subtle form in order to contribute to Krishna's enjoyment. Radha is Krishna's delighter, charmer and life's all. She is the queen of all the lovely maidens of Braja. She is the crest Gem of all celestial beauties. Radha and Krishna are inseparable as fire and its heat, ice and its coolness, flower and its fragrance.

The body of Radha is made up of sweet tenderness and loveliness for Sri Krishna. The substance of her subtle form as Mahabhava is Krishna Prema. Ardent passion for Sri Krishna is her dress. Her sweet radiant smile is the camphor. All good qualities are her garlands. All the Bhavas form the ornaments of her limbs. Lord Krishna's Name and qualities

form the ornaments of her ears. Krishna's Name and qualities flow out in a stream from her tongue. She serves Krishna with the drink of Premarasa or Shyama-Rasa.

The culmination of Bhakti is reached in Madhurya Bhava. The lover and the Beloved become one through the intensity of love. Radha had this type of love. In Madhurya Bhava there is the closest relationship between the devotee and the Lord. There is no sensuality in Madhurya Bhava. There is no tinge of carnality in it. Passionate people cannot understand this Bhava as their minds are saturated with passion and lower sexual appetite. Sufist saints also have the Bhava of lover and Beloved (Madhurya Bhava). Gita Govinda written by Jayadeva is full of Madhurya Rasa. The language of love which the mystics use cannot be comprehended by worldly persons. Only Gopis, Radha, Mira, Tukaram, Narada, Hafiz, can understand the language.

Glory to Radha, the consort of Lord Krishna! Glory, glory to Lord Krishna, the Joy of Devaki, the Goal of Yogis, the Refuge of devotees and the Delight of Yasoda and Nanda. May their blessings be upon you all.

SONG OF NAVAVIDHA BHAKTI

(Thars: Rama Hare Siya Ram)

Rama Hare Siya Rama Ram
Rama Hare Siya Rama Ram
Rama Hare Siya Rama Ram
Rama Hare Siya Rama Ram

Krishna Hare Radhe Shyama Shyam
Krishna Hare Radhe Shyama Shyam
Krishna Hare Radhe Shyama Shyam
Krishna Hare Radhe Shyama Shyam

There are four kinds of Bhaktas,
Arta, Jijnasu, Artharthi,
Jnani the wise of knowledge
Of these the wise is the best.

There are nine modes of Bhakti,
Sravana, Kirtan, Smaran,
Padasevan, Archan, Vandan,
Dasya, Sakhya, Atmanivedan,

(Rama Hare Siya Ram...)

Sravan is hearing His Lilas,
Kirtan is singing His Name;
Smaran is His remembrance.
Padasevan is service of (His) feet.
Padasevan is service of country,
Padasevan is service of humanity,
Padasevan is service of sick,
Padasevan is service of poor,
Padasevan is service of parents.

(Rama Hare Siya Ram...)

Archan is offering flowers,
Vandan is prostrations,
Dasyam is Servant Bhav,
Sakhya is His friendship,
Atmanivedan is Saranagati,
Atmanivedan is self-surrender,
Atmanivedan is Prapatti,
Atmanivedan is highest Bhakti,

(Rama Hare Siya Ram...)

There is love between servant and master,
There is love between friends and friends,
There is love between father and son,
There is love between husband and wife,
(There is love between brother and sister).
Moha is infatuated love,
(Moha is finite)
Physical love is passion,
It is mixed with hatred,
Divine love is infinite,

(Rama Hare Siya Ram...)

The nine modes of Bhakti
Are graded series of Divine Love,
Atmanivedan is highest Love,
This is Madhurya Bhav
(This is Para Bhakti)
In this the heart is the real flower,
This is offered to the Lord,
Two have become now one,
Oneness is the Reality.
(Para Bhakti is Jnan);
This is Sayujya Mukti.

(Rama Hare Siya Ram...)

SONG OF IMMANENCE OF RAM

(Thars: Sunaja)

Om Sri Ram, Jaya Ram, Jaya Jaya Ram
Sri Ram, Jaya Ram, Jaya Jaya Ram
In earth, water, fire, air and ether is Ram,
In the heart, mind, Prana and senses is Ram,
In the breath blood, nerves and brain is Ram,
In sentiment, thought, word and action is Ram,
Within is Ram, without is Ram, in front is Ram,
Above is Ram, below is Ram, behind is Ram,
To the right is Ram, to the left is Ram,
everywhere is Ram,
Vyapak is Ram, Vibhu is Ram, Poornam is Ram

(Sri Ram, Jaya Ram...)

Sat is Ram, Chit is Ram, Anand is Ram,
Santi is Ram, Sakti is Ram, Jyoti is Ram,
Prema is Ram, mercy is Ram, beauty is Ram,
Bliss is Ram, joy is Ram, purity is Ram,
Refuge, solace, path, Lord, witness is Ram,
Father, mother, friend, relative, Guru is Ram,
Support, source, centre, ideal, goal is Ram,
Creator, preserver, destroyer, redeemer is Ram

(Sri Ram, Jaya Ram...)

The goal ultimate of one and all is Ram,
Attainable through Sraddha, Prema, worship is Ram,
Accessible to devotion and surrender is Ram.
Approachable by prayer, Japa and Kirtan is Ram,
Hosanna to Ram, glory to Ram, victory to Ram,
Adorations to Ram, salutations to Ram,
prostrations to Ram
(Sri Ram, Jaya Ram...)

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN A THEIST AND AN ATHEIST

Golmal (Atheist): O Ram! Please show me your God or Brahman of whom you speak very highly everyday. If God really exists I should see Him with my own eyes now.

Ram (Theist): I will beat you now with this stick. Please show me your pain.

Golmal: How can I show you my pain Ram? Your question is quite absurd. One will have to feel the pain himself.

Ram: Similar is the case with God also, O Golmal. You will have to realise Him through constant and intense meditation. He cannot be seen by these fleshy eyes, as He is beyond the reach of the senses and mind.

Golmal: If God is beyond the reach of the senses then He should be a non-entity, a mere void, a negative concept, a metaphysical abstraction. I do not wish to attain such a negative state of nothingness. I will not gain anything by attaining Him. I am very happy here when I enjoy the different kinds of sensual objects. There is nothing beyond these sensual pleasures. Why do you talk some nonsense? Something beyond the senses? How could this be? I think you are dreaming. I think you are in the cloud O Ram! I cannot believe such things. I am a scientist. I want accurate laboratory proofs.

Ram: Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Well said Golmal. I really pity you. Had you developed two horns on your forehead, I would have rightly called you a cow or a buffalo. You want laboratory proofs? Very fine indeed. You wish to limit the

illimitable all-pervading God in your test-tube, blow-pipe and chemicals. God is the source of your chemicals. He is the substratum for your atoms, electrons and molecules. Without Him no atom or electrons will move. He is the inner ruler (Antaryamin). He is Niyanta. Without Him the fire cannot burn, the sun cannot shine, the air cannot move. Without Him you cannot see, cannot talk, cannot hear, cannot think. He is the maker of all scientific laws, the law of gravitation, the law of cohesion, the law of attraction and repulsion, etc. He is the law-giver. Bow to Him with faith and devotion. You will have a thorough knowledge of the Science of sciences, Brahma Vidya, through His grace and attain Moksha.

Golmal: Nonsense. Is there anything like Science of sciences? I had my education in Oxford and Harvard Universities. I never heard there of a science like this. You are not only a dreamer but a liar also.

Ram: Do not use indecent words, Golmal. Be polite. Be courteous. Behave like a gentleman. Just note the conversation that took place between Saunaka and Angiras. Saunaka, the great Grahastha, questioned Angiras, *"Kasmin Bhagavo Vijnate Sarvamidam Vijnatam Bhavati*—O Bhagavan! What is that which being known all these become known?" Angiras replied "It is Brahma Vidya, the Science of sciences, by knowing which the Immortal Brahman is realised." By knowledge of Brahma Vidya or the Science of sciences you hear what cannot be heard, you perceive what cannot be perceived, you know what cannot be known, you think what cannot be thought of. Just as by the knowledge of a single nugget of gold all that is made of gold is known, the difference being only a name arising from speech, but the truth being that all is gold; just as by the knowledge of a single pair of nail-scissor all that is made of iron is known, all modifications being only a name based upon words, but the truth being that all is iron, thus, O Golmal, is that Brahma Vidya or the Science of sciences.

The basis for all the secular sciences is Brahma Vidya or Adhyatmic Science. If you know this Supreme Science through direct intuition, you will have knowledge of all other worldly sciences, just as you will have knowledge of articles made of clay if you have a knowledge of clay itself. You cannot learn this Science of sciences in any University. You will have to learn this under a Brahma Srotri, Brahma Nishtha Guru after controlling your senses and the mind. This is a Science taught by a Seer or Rishi or a liberated Sage in the forests under a tree (Forest University). You will have to undergo a rare discipline there—a discipline which checks the wandering mind and outgoing senses, a discipline which cannot be had in any of the Universities of the world.

Golmal: What will the students eat there? Are there hotels and decent rooms?

Ram: Some aspirants practise Vayubhakshana. They live on air for some days through this Yogic practice. Some live on Kandamula or roots. Some take Sattu-atta or dried flour. They live in thatched cottages or grass huts, on the banks of the Ganga.

Golmal: Is that all? Can you not get a little butter, some sweets or jam and toast occasionally? How can they live without fruits and vitamins?

Ram: Jam and butter! Sweets! You cannot dream of such things. These things are not necessary to keep up health. Yogis practise Khechari Mudra, Pranayama, enter into Samadhi, drink the nectar that dribbles from the Sahsrara (Amritasrava) and maintain a high standard of vigour and vitality. They suspend the breath and live for any number of years they like. Sweetmeats, jam, etc., are not suitable for the practice of Yoga.

Golmal: How can I believe that God exists when I cannot see Him actually with my eyes?

Ram: Though you do not see the stars in the day

time, yet they do exist. Though you cannot see the sun on a cloudy day, yet it does exist. Even so though you cannot see God with these physical eyes, Yet He does exist. If you get the divine eye or the eye of intuition (Jnana Chaksus) by the practice of meditation you will behold Him.

Golmal: I think, O Ram, that there is no such thing as God or 'Immortal soul' or divine eyes or eternal bliss or soul. It is all the wild imagination of the so-called Vedantins and Bhaktas. Just as red colour is produced by the combination of lime, nut and betel leaves, so also this body is formed by combination of the five elements. This body only is the soul. There is nothing beyond this body. There is nothing beyond sensual enjoyments. The philosophy of flesh or the philosophy of Virochana or the Epicurean, 'Eat, drink and be merry' appeals to me most. We should extract as much pleasure as possible from this body and sensual objects. There is no use in practising penances or self-restraint. We should allow the Indriyas to run riot or to have a free play with the sensual objects. This only is wisdom. Fasting, observing Mouna, celibacy, meditation are the foolish acts of an ignorant man.

Ram: These worldly objects are ephemeral. They wear out the vigour of all senses. Even the longest life is very short. No man can be made happy by wealth, sons and woman. Man weeps in old age. He is drowned in sorrow when he loses money, when his wife or son dies, when he develops incurable disease. Nachiketas was not tempted by the worldly gifts of Lord Yama. He persisted in attaining the eternal bliss of the Immortal Soul and got it through the instructions of Lord Yama. You are a passionate, ignorant man. You have neither discrimination nor dispassion. You are drowned in worldliness. That is the reason why you cling to these worldly objects. Your mental state is really deplorable! I really pity you! May lord bestow upon you right understanding and pure intellect (Visuddha Buddhi). You have got a perverted intellect now (Viparita

Buddhi). You have a clouded understanding. You are under worldly intoxication. You cannot have a clear conception of the Supreme Tattva.

Golmal: O Ram! Nature only does everything. Why should we accept the existence of God? Nature nourishes. Nature is everything. This world can go on without an Isvara or Lord. Nature can manage everything.

Ram: Nature is not independent. She is the handmaid of the Lord of Nature. Nature is His Sakti or illusory power. Just as clay is to the potter, so is Nature to the Lord. The Lord gazes at Prakriti or Nature. He is the Prime Mover. He sets the Prakriti in motion. Then the Prakriti starts her activities. Just as heat is inseparable from the fire, so also Sakti is inseparable from the Lord (Sakta or possessor of Sakti). Just as the power of burning is inherent in fire, so also Sakti is inherent in the Lord.

Golmal: What are the chief attributes of your Lord?

Ram: God is Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent and all-merciful.

Golmal: Can He make a two-sided paper only one-sided? Can He make a man jump on his own shoulders? Can He make the fire burn downwards? Can He make the sun radiate coolness? Can He make a barren woman's son father of seven children? If He cannot do these things, He is no longer the Lord.

Ram: I have already told you, Golmal, that you have a perverted intellect. That is the reason why you are asking these impertinent and useless questions. A spiritual-minded person will never talk a word in vain. You are wasting your life, time and energy. God is Omnipotent. He can do and undo things in the twinkling of an eye. His grace makes the dumb man eloquent and the cripple a climber of mountains. Develop Sraddha, Bhakti. Utilise your body in His service. It is very difficult to get a human birth; therefore try your best to realise in this birth. Your questions

are all silly and meaningless. There are some fools who put questions like these: "How many teeth a crow has? Why cannot the elephant lay eggs?" You are also one of them. Try to become wise. Learn to discriminate. Give up wrangling and arguing. Develop your heart. Make it soft and pure.

Golmal: O Ram! You say, "God is all-merciful." I say, "God is very cruel. He is very unjust. He makes some very rich, others very poor; some healthy and others very sickly and deformed from the very birth."

Ram: God is quite just. He is the silent witness. This world runs in accordance with definite laws. There is order. Virtue brings its own reward; vice brings its own punishment. God neither punishes nor rewards any individual. Man reaps the fruits of his own actions. As he sows, so he reaps. The law of cause and effect operates. This law is inexorable.

Golmal: Why God created this world? When He is Poornakama, i.e., one in whom all desires are gratified, how did the desire to create this world arise in His mind?

Ram: Some people take delight in creating imaginary doubts and such other controversial questions like, "Why God created this world? When did Karma begin? Why should there be ignorance at all? When did man take his first birth? How can ignorance come in the Atman who is of the nature of Satchidananda? Which is more powerful whether Prarabdha or Purushartha?" and many other questions. They put such questions simply to satisfy their curiosity as a sort of intellectual amusement. Such questions do not help in anyway their progress in the spiritual path. The result is mere lingual warfare and beating about the bush with no substantial result. These are all Ati-Prasnas or transcendental questions. Words are finite. Language is imperfect. One can get a solution when he transcends the three states and the three Gunas and rests in his own essential Svarupa, through constant and protracted

Nididhyasana and attains Dridha-bhumi or Yogarudha state. The frail, finite intellect that is conditioned in time, space, causation cannot peep into the beyond. You will get answers for these questions when you get knowledge of the Self.

All doubts are rent asunder, the three knots are broken when one attains Brahmic Sthiti or Sahaja-Avastha or the native state of pristine purity and glory. People generally rack their brains and waste their energy when such doubts assail them. This is a trick of the mind to delude the aspirants and swerve them from the path of divine contemplation. What is wanted is rigorous Sadhana and burning Vairagya and strong Mumukshutva and sustained determination.

Golmal: If God is all-merciful, if He is an ocean of mercy, why should there be pain and disease in this world?

Ram: Pain is the only best thing in this world. It is an eye-opener. It is a blessing in disguise. It infuses mercy in your heart and turns your mind towards God. It develops your will-power or power of endurance. It forces you to find out the way of escape from the clutches of Maya or the thraldom of matter.

Golmal: Why should there be evil in this world? Can He not create a world with pure bliss only? Why should there be a mixture of pleasure and pain? Does this not go against His Omnipotent nature?

Ram: This universe is a mixture of good and evil, This is a relative plane. You cannot expect pure unalloyed happiness here. You can find pure bliss in your innermost self or Brahman only. Evil is not a distinct entity. Good and evil are the obverse and reverse sides of the same coin. Evil exists to glorify good. What is evil at one time is good at other time. What is evil for one is good for another. A rogue is a saint of the future. If you keep him in the company of a saint he will become a veritable

Mahatma. Have you not studied the lives of rogue Ratnakar, Jagai and Madai! They became very good saints when they the came in contact with great souls. The body of a man is the result of good and evil actions. Therefore he should reap the fruits of his good and evil actions viz., pleasure and pain. Destroy ignorance. Understand philosophy and become wise. It is high time for you now.

Golmal: O Ram! Thank you very much indeed. My mind is slightly turned towards your side by your impressive and forcible instruction. Please give me some strong proofs for the existence of God. I am led to believe now that some Supreme intelligence or power governs the universe.

Ram: God or Brahman is Svatah-siddha (self-proved). The Self is the basis of the action of proving. Therefore it is evident before the action of proving itself. It is therefore impossible to deny it. In denying the existence of Brahman you deny your own existence, which is absurd. Brahman is the basis of all pre-suppositions, demonstrations and all notions.

Golmal: I have understood this point well. Doubtless the Self cannot be demonstrated. But it is possible to infer His existence from certain empirical facts. Please furnish me with those facts. Then I will have perfect conviction.

Ram: The existence of Brahman is known on the ground of its being the Self of everyone, because everyone is conscious of the existence of the Self. There is an inherent feeling in everybody "I exist—*Aham Asmi.*" Man never thinks "I am not." This self of whose existence all are conscious is Brahman.

Golmal: Well said indeed! I can understand this point very well. It appeals to me nicely. Please teach me further in this direction.

Ram: Close your eyes and imagine for a moment that you are dead.

Golmal: Yes. I have closed my eyes now. I now imagine that I am dead.

Ram: What do you find now?

Golmal: I imagine that my dead body is lying down on the ground as a corpse and I am witnessing the dead body.

Ram: You can never imagine your annihilation. You can never think that you do not exist after the physical body is thrown away. This itself clearly proves that you are always the witnessing subject (Sakshi Drashta).

Golmal: This also convinces me to a certain extent. Please give me some more practical illustrations.

Ram: O Golmal! Here is a very practical illustration. You dream sometimes that you are dead and that your relatives are weeping. Even in that supposed death-state you see and hear them weeping. This clearly indicates that even after seeming death, life really persists. This also proves that immortality is an inherent attribute of the soul. You exist even after the physical sheath is thrown out. That existence is Brahman or Atman.

Golmal: Ram, this is really a wonderful illustration. My doubts about the existence of God or Self are dwindling. Please give me some instructions from the experiences in daily life.

Ram: A certain lady had a fall from the third storey of her house. Underneath there was a bed of sharp angular stones. She would have received very serious injuries but she was miraculously saved. She herself expressed, "I actually felt the warm embrace of some invisible hands. Some mysterious power saved me." Instances like this are not uncommon in daily life.

Golmal: May I hear another illustration?

Ram: You find that even the world's best doctor fails to cure a dying king. You might have also heard of many

instances where patients ailing from the worst type of disease are cured miraculously where even the ablest doctors have declared the case to be hopeless. This itself is clear proof that there is the Divine Hand behind all cure.

Golmal: Can you illustrate this through the theory of Karma?

Ram: Some people die when they are eighty years old, some die when they are in the womb, some die at twenty, some at forty. What is the cause for the variation? Who has fixed the span of life for all? This clearly proves that there is the theory of Karma, that there is one Omniscient Lord who is the Dispenser of the fruits of the actions of the Jivas, who fixed the span of life of the Jivas in accordance with their nature of Karma or actions, who knows the exact relation between Karma and their fruits. As Karma is Jada or insentient, it certainly cannot dispense with the fruits of their actions.

Golmal: Prove the existence of God by taking facts from this physical body which is regarded as the temple of God.

Ram: The insentient engine of a railway train cannot move without the intelligent driver. Even so this insentient body-engine cannot move without the intelligent driver—God or Isvara. From the existence of the body you can infer the existence of the hidden driver of the body engine.

Mark! There is display of intelligence in every inch of creation. Who pumps blood into the arteries? Who converts food into chyle and red coloured blood? Who does the peristalsis in the bowels and stomach and send the faecal matter to the rectum and anus? Who closes and shuts the eyelids to prevent dust from falling into the delicate eyes? Who gave intelligence to the cells and glands to secrete semen, milk, bile, saliva, gastric juice etc., from the blood? Who gave intelligence and power to the spermatozoa to move, unite with the ovum in the womb and develop into

a foetus? Wherefrom does this minutest, subtlest substance, Jiva, as nice as the ten-thousandth part of the point of a hair, derive the capacity to assume gradually the features, complexion and shape of its parents? What is the power which sustains it and helps its growth in the mother's womb? Who arranges for milk in the mother's breast before the child is born?

How wonderful is the human machine! How harmoniously all the organs work in unison in the economy of nature! In Gita this body is known as *Navadvara Pura* (nine-gated city). In summer the skin works energetically to throw off all impurities of the blood and to relieve the kidneys which had over-worked in winter. The endocrine glands, pituitary, pineal, adrenals work in perfect harmony in manufacturing the internal secretions, and the harmones to help the metabolic process of the body, growth and structure.

It is a great marvel to see the working of the nervous system under the control of the brain, and the movement of the afferent and efferent impulses through the spinal cord. There is a magnificent electric battery inside with switchboard and wires. The operator is Antaryamin (Inner Ruler, God), who controls and supervises everything. He is Upadrashta (supervisor), Anumanta (permitter), and Maheswara (the great Lord). Look at the heart and lungs which work under the direct control of the brain. How wonderful are these vital organs, the tripods of life? Can an eminent scientist manufacture any of these organs, tissues, fibres, tendons or cells in his boasted laboratory with his boasted intellect. How harmoniously the different systems such as the digestive system, circulatory system, nervous system, integumentary system work without any rest! How beautifully the different centres in the brain such as the vision-centre, olfactory centre, centre of smell etc., do their functions! One is struck with awe and wonder when he begins to think seriously on the structure and working of

this delicate human machinery. To think that this most wonderful mechanism is the result and product of a fortuitous combination of matter or atoms is simply absurd and ridiculous indeed! It has been, doubtless, moulded and fashioned by some architect who is infinitely more skilful, intelligent and powerful than the ordinary architects who build palaces and bungalows. That architect is God or Isvara (Ruler) or Creator. Call Him by any name. It does not matter much.

Golmal: Give me facts for the existence of God by the study of mind and its functions.

Ram: Unless there exists one continuous principle equally connected with the past, the present and the future or an absolutely unchangeable Self which cognises everything, we are unable to account for remembrance, recognition and so on, which are subject to mental impression on place, time and cause. The Self is distinct from and superior to ideas, because the ideas require an ultimate principle which renders the cognition of the ideas possible.

The Manas is an organ of sensation and thought. It must be under the control of some one who uses this instrument. The Jiva or human soul is not the Director of the mind because we see that ordinary men are swayed away ruthlessly by the mind. Therefore there must exist some other Supreme Being, who is the Director of the mind. He is the Anataryamin, the inner Ruler and Controller.

Then again look at the miraculous power of the mind. In the Kenopanishad the first Mantra begins, "Who is the Director of the mind?" There is the play of the Divine hand here also. Can my brother psychologist manufacture a mind from his laboratory? We are struck with wonder when we look into the diverse faculties of the mind, viz., power of discrimination, power of judgment, power of reasoning, retentive power, power of imagination, cogitative faculty or the power of reflection, power of understanding,

etc. No one but God can create such a powerful and miraculous mind.

Golmal: Give me facts for His existence from the study of nature.

Ram: Who provides food for the little frog that lives hidden between the strata of rocks? Who clothed the fruits with skin to prevent contamination from outside.? Who divided the seasons and Ritus? Who made the water hot beneath the ice to enable the fishes to live comfortably in the icy regions of the Himalayas, in Gauri Kund and other places? Who has combined four parts of inert nitrogen with one part of combustible oxygen gas?

At whose command does the sun rise punctually in the morning and set in the evening? The sun is 9,28,30,000 miles away from the earth. What a great wonder that from such a long distance the sun is able to bring light, heat, energy and vitality to all the living beings who inhabit this globe! There are countless millions of suns much larger than the one which we see but which appear to us like tiny stars on account of their being remoter than the sun with which we are acquainted. It takes millions of years for the light from these stars to reach the earth. The velocity of light is 1,86,000 miles per second. Light from distant stars has not yet reached us even now. What a great marvel it is! All these stars, planets and satellites are revolving in the sky in fixed orbits from day to day, month to month and year to year under immutable definite laws. God is the Niyanta. The Sun cannot shine without Him. Fire cannot burn without Him.

Who supplies water to the trees, flowers, various shrubs etc., that are found in the forests? Who is this unseen, untiring gardener who works without wages or any sort of remuneration? Who gives nourishment in time to tigers, lions, birds, fishes, plants, insects, worms etc.? How is it that only human beings are born of human beings, birds of birds, tigers of tigers, dogs of dogs, horses of horses, elephants of elephants, ants of ants, bears of bears, mules of mules, an

exact copy of their parents in every respect? From a tiny seed there springs a huge banyan tree that can give shelter for thousands of persons. From a tiny seed there comes out a big mango tree that gives thousands of delicious fruits. What is that power which supports and nourishes these trees? What is that hidden miraculous power that brings out a huge form with hair, fingers, toes, eyes, nose, teeth, ears, legs, thighs, etc. out of one drop of semen? What is that power that brings out a mighty tree with foliage, flowers, twigs and fruits out of a tiny seed?

Golmal: Can you explain the meaning of the 'Ekasloki' of Sri Sankara?

Ram: In the day time what gives you light? Sun. At night when there is no sun, what gives you light? Moon, stars and lamps. When there are no sun, moon, stars and lamps what gives you light? Eyes. Which gives you light when the eyes are closed? Buddhi or intellect. Who finds out the defect in the intellect whether there is clarity or turbidity? Aham (I). That Aham is the Light of lights or the Eternal Soul or Atman or the Infinite.

Golmal: What can we infer from the study of deep sleep. The Vedantins talk much of deep sleep. What is the difference between sleep and Samadhi?

Ram: In sleep there are no senses, no objects, no mind and yet you experience the highest bliss. When there are no objects wherefrom have you derived the bliss? The mind rests in Brahman during sleep and it is from Brahman this Bliss is derived. Further, during sleep when there are no other persons 'I' alone exists.

In sleep you experience Avidya-Avrita Sukha. There is a veil between you and the Self. You do not return to the waking state with intuitional knowledge; you are ignorant. Whereas in Samadhi you get knowledge of the Self; you enjoy directly the eternal bliss of the Self as there is no veil. Your ignorance is destroyed in Samadhi.

Golmal: Give me a very simple but very impressive proof for the existence of Soul.

Ram: You say in daily life 'My body,' 'My Prana,' 'My Indriya,' 'My mind.' This clearly denotes that the Self or Atman is entirely different from body, mind, Prana and Indriyas. Mind and body are your servants or instruments. They are as much outside of you as these towels, chairs, cups are. You are holding the body just as you hold a long walking stick in your hand. You are the possessor or proprietor of this body. The body is your property or possession. The body, the senses, the mind etc., are not the soul, but belong to it.

Golmal: I am quite satisfied now, O my beloved Ram, I am quite convinced. I was under a great delusion till now. I was sunk in utter ignorance. I am grateful to you for your valuable, cogent, convincing spiritual instructions. Thou art my Guru and saviour. Please tell me now the method to attain this immortal self.

Ram: Purify the mind. Control the senses. Develop the four means. Hear the Srutis. Reflect and meditate. You will attain Self-realisation.

(Golmal did rigorous Tapas and meditation and eventually attained the final beatitude of life. He now addresses Ram.)

Golmal: O Ram! O my venerable preceptor! Thousand prostrations unto thee. Thou hast saved me from this terrible Samsara. I now rejoice in the Self. Atman is now like the Amalaka fruit in the palm of my hand. I behold only the Self everywhere. The glory of Brahman is ineffable. All my doubts, fears, worries, sorrows, delusion, pain have vanished in toto. I am bodiless, mindless. I am all-pervading intelligence. I am self-luminous. Sivoham, Sivoham, Sivah Kevaloham. Suddhoham. No words can adequately describe the state of illumination.

Again and again prostrations unto thee, my Saviour and Redeemer.

Ram: O Golmal! Rest in the Supreme Peace. Now roam about and disseminate this Supreme Knowledge throughout the length and breadth of the land, lift up your brothers from the quagmire of Samsara. You are no longer a Golmal with a perverted intellect. Thou art a blessed Jivanmukta now. Thou art Swami Jnanananda Saraswati.

Jnanananda: My adorable Lord! I shall carry out thy behests. Obeisance unto thee!

Jnanananda sings a Vedantic Song:

Chidananda Chidananda Chidananda Hum
Har Halme Almast Satchidananda Hum
Nijananda Nijananda Nijananda Hum
Har Halme Almast Satchidananda Hum
Sivananda Sivananda Sivananda Hum
Agadabhumwala Agadabhumwala Akhilananda Hum
Ajarananda Amarananda Achalananda Hum
Har Halme Almast Satchidananda Hum
Nirbhaya aur Nischinta Chidghanananda Hum
Kaivalya Kevala Kutastha Ananda Hum
Nitya Siddha Suddha Satchidananda Hum
(Chidananda...)

Knowledge Bliss, Knowledge Bliss, Bliss Absolute
In all conditions I am Knowledge, Bliss Absolute
I am without old age, without death, without motion,
In all conditions I am Knowledge, Bliss Absolute
I am without fear, without worry, Bliss Absolute
...Knowledge Absolute
...Existence Absolute

Independent, unchanging, non-dual Atma
...Advaita Atma
...Immortal Atma

Eternal pure, perfect Knowledge, Bliss Absolute
...Knowledge Absolute
...Existence Absolute
(Chidananda...)

BHAKTI YOGA-I

1. Jnana (wisdom) and Vairagya (dispassion) are the two sons of Bhakti (devotion).

2. Without Bhakti, Jnana will dry up and dispassion will evaporate.

3. Without oil the lamp will get extinguished. Without Bhakti, Jnana and dispassion will perish.

4. The proof that man loves God is first shown by loving his fellow-men.

5. Ask God to give you His Grace that you may suffer willingly. Ask not God to take the suffering from you.

6. With devotion humility comes.

7. In the wake of devotion, renunciation follows.

8. Devotion is the master-key to attain divine perfection.

9. Bhakti includes the love of humanity.

10. Bhakti consists in love to God and through this in love to man.

11. Love to humanity must be based on love to God; if it is not, it is bound to have a shaky foundation.

BHAKTI YOGA-II

1. Love unites the individual soul with God.

2. It is only love that finds out God.

3. God is the primal essence.

4. The vision of God is a gift of God. It is not an achievement attained by human effort independent of God.

5. God is revealed to those who love Him and whose minds have been purified by devotion to holy scriptures and holy preceptors, practice of Karma Yoga and more than all, Prapatti or self-surrender.

6. God is a lover who resides in every heart irrespective of caste and creed, high and low.

7. Loving remembrance is the method of reaching Him.

8. I have drunk the elixir of God by which all other elixirs have become bitter and worthless.

9. Many saints came from the so-called lower classes. They were illiterate. They did manual labour to make both ends meet. They were persecuted by persons in power.

10. Sadhana was a dealer in meat. Dharma was a poor Jat cultivator. Sena was a court barber at Rewa. Kabir was a weaver. Raidas was a cobbler. Namadev was a tailor. Tukaram was a cultivator.

11. Without renunciation, Bhakti or devotion can never be cultivated in the heart.

12. God demands complete self-surrender from His devotees.

13. Love is a tremendous force in the world. It draws men together. It is quite as real as electricity or magnetism or gravity.

14. All life is divine. All love is basically divine love.

15. A devotee who has made total self-surrender to God feels that he has no independent existence of his own. He lives in the Lord.

16. The way to attain Krishna is to become a Gopi.

17. Make your body the temple of the Lord. Become Lord-filled, Lord-intoxicated.

WHAT IS BHAKTI?

In the Sivananda Lahari, Sri Sankaracharya explained the nature of Bhakti in the beautiful verse:

Ankolam Nijabijasantatir-
ayaskantopalam Suchika,

Sadhvi Naijavibhum Lata Kshitiruham
Sindhuh Saridvallabham;
Prapnotiha Yatha Tatha Pasupateh
Padaravindadvayam,
Chetovrittirupetya Tishthati Sada
Sa Bhaktirityuchyate

Here the Bhakta's intense love for God is compared to five well-known examples.

1. The Ankola fruits fall to the ground and the seeds are liberated. But they are instantly and powerfully attracted to the trunk of the mother tree. They move in the direction of the trunk and stick to it.

2. The needle flies to the magnet, attracted by an irresistible force.

3. A devout and chaste wife lives constantly in the thought of her husband and his service.

4. A creeper restlessly searches for a tree to entwine itself; and once it has caught a tree it winds itself round it inextricably as it were, with great "affection and love." Even if the creeper is violently pulled away from the tree, the instant it is released it will rush back to the tree and wind itself around it.

5. The river bouncing towards the ocean surmounts all obstacles and flows ceaselessly till it attains the ocean.

Such should be the devotion of the Bhakta to the Lord—constant, intense and powerful.

NAVAVIDHA-BHAKTI

Sravanam kirtanam vishnoh
Smaranam padasevanam;
Archanam vandnam dasyam
Sakhyam-atmanivedanam.

Sri Vishnu-Sravane Parikshidabhavad-
Vaiyasikah Kirtane,

Prahladah Smarane Tadanghribhajane
Lakshmih Prithuh Pujane;
Akrurastvabhivadane-tha Hanuman
Dasye-tha Sakhyerjunah,
Sarvasvatmanivedane Balirabhut
Kaivalyamesham Padam.

Hearing the Lord's stories, singing His glories, remembering Him always, serving at His feet, worshipping Him, adoring Him, being His humble servant, being His friend and dedicating one's all to Him, these are the nine ways of attaining Him.

Parikshit attained Him by hearing His stories; Vyasa's son by singing His glories; Prahlada by constantly remembering Him. Lakshmi by serving at His feet; Prithu by worshipping Him; Akrura by adoring Him; Hanuman by being His humble servant; and Bali by dedicating his all to Him. All attained salvation equally, though by different methods.

TEN BHAKTI COMMANDMENTS

1. Develop devotion through Japa, Kirtan, Sattvic food, worship (Puja), etc. Yearn for God-vision. Love Him with all your heart. Remember Him constantly.

2. Keep the company of saints, the righteous and the wise. Study devotional books like the Gita, the Bhagavata, the Ramayana, the lives of saints.

3. The name of the Lord is Divine Nectar. Name is your sole Refuge, Prop and Treasure. Name and Nami (God) are one. Always chant His Names with devotion. Do Kirtan. This is the principal Sadhana in Kaliyuga.

4. Pray to the Lord from the core of your heart: "I am Thine. All is Thine. Thy Will be done. I am an instrument in Thy Hands. You do everything. You are just. Grant me faith and devotion."

5. Feel the presence of God with you. See God in every face. Behold the whole world as the Lord.

6. Practise Sadachara (right conduct). Cultivate virtues and eradicate vices. Be good. Be kind to all. Be humble. Be pure. Speak the truth. Control anger. Have a large heart. Develop compassion.

7. Teach the eye to behold the Form of the Lord. Teach the ear to hear the Lord's Lilas and Glory. Teach the hands to serve the saints and the poor.

8. Take refuge in the Lord. Do total, ungrudging self-surrender. Live for Him. Offer your actions to Him. His Grace will descend on you.

9. Have perfect trust in God. Faith is necessary to attain God. Faith can take you to the inner chambers of the Lord.

10. Constantly repeat some inspiring verses (praises of God's glory) or some Mantras, or the Names of God. This will be your Divine background of thought.

RULES FOR JAPA

While doing Japa the following rules should be observed.

1. Take a bath, or wash your hands, feet, face and mouth before sitting for Japa in the morning. At other times this is not absolutely necessary. Do Japa whenever you have leisure, specially during the Sandhyas or the junctions of the day (morning, noon and evening) and before going to bed.

2. A comfortable Asana (Padmasana, Siddhasana, etc.) helps to make the mind also steady, controls Rajas and aids concentration.

3. Face the North or East. This exercises a subtle influence and enhances the efficacy of Japa.

4. Before commencing the Japa repeat elevating prayers invoking the aid of your Ishta-Devata. This induces proper Sattvic Bhava.

5. Repeat your Ishta Mantra 108 or 1080 times daily (one to 10 Malas). Gradually increase this.

6. Think of the meaning of the Mantra while repeating it.

7. Pronounce each letter of the Mantra correctly and distinctly. Do not repeat it too fast or too slow. Increase the speed only when the mind wanders.

8. Variety in Japa is necessary to sustain interest, avoid fatigue, and counteract monotony. Repeat aloud for a time, then hum the Mantra and repeat mentally sometimes.

9. During Japa you should be alert and vigilant. This is important. Otherwise after a time the mind will begin to wander and drowsiness will overcome you.

10. Keep a picture of your Ishtha-Devata in front. Side by side with Japa think of the Lord as present before you and picture His entrancing, beautiful form. This practice aids tremendously to the efficacy or power of your Sadhana.

11. Feel that your heart is being purified and the mind is becoming steady by the power of the Mantra with the grace of God. God and His Name are identical.

12. After Japa is over do not immediately leave the place and do not mix with everyone nor plunge into worldly activity. Sit very quietly for about 10 minutes at least, humming some prayer, remembering the Lord or reflecting upon His infinite love. Then after devout prostrations, leave the place and commence your routine duties. Spiritual vibrations will be intact.

13. Keep your Mantra a secret. Never disclose it to anyone.

14. Carry on the current of Japa mentally even at other times, in whatever works you may be engaged.

YOGA OF SELF-SURRENDER—1

1. Self-surrender is a direct, valid mode of God-realisation.

2. Self-surrender is the easier and surer means of God-realisation.

3. Self-surrender is a safe and sure means of God-realisation.

4. Nothing can be achieved without surrender to the Lord.

THE TECHNIQUE

5. Surrender yourself and all your belongings at the feet of the Supreme. Live a dedicated life of Godliness.

6. Think that nothing is yours and everything belongs to God. This is surrender to God.

7. Give the power of attorney to God. Let Him do whatever He wants. You will have no worry or anxiety. You will be peaceful.

8. Surrender contains intense love and faith.

9. Surrender must be complete. You cannot have any part of yours.

10. The entire being, mind, intellect, Chitta and egoism, must be surrendered to the Lord.

11. Desire and egoism are two great obstacles to self-surrender.

12. If the mind says: "I am Thine, my Lord;" if the ego says: "I must become a High Court Judge;" if the intellect says: "I am a great devotee;" and if the Chitta says: "I must attain Siddhis;" this will not constitute perfect, unreserved surrender. This is only cheating the Lord, the inner ruler and witness.

13. After surrendering to the Lord, you should not grumble, fret and fume, when any trouble comes. You should not complain to the Lord: "O Lord, You have no

eyes. You have no compassion." If you complain then there is no meaning in your surrender.

THE FRUITS OF SURRENDER

14. Through surrender the devotee immerses himself into the eternal essence.

15. You can endear yourself unto the Lord only by self-surrender.

16. The more the surrender the more the grace.

17. The degree of grace is in direct proportion to the degree of surrender.

18. You do not lose anything in surrendering to the Lord. You become one with the Lord by surrendering to the Lord. You possess all the Aisvaryas of the Lord. You attain fullness.

MANTRA FOR SURRENDER

19. "Sri Krishna Saranam Mama, Sri Krishnah Saranam Mama," "Harih Saranam," "I am Thine, all is Thine, Thy Will be done my Lord," are formulas for effecting self-surrender.

20. Surrender comes out of intense love and unshakable faith in God.

21. Intense Bhakti can only be attained by the Grace of God.

22. This is Prapatti Yoga or the Yoga of self-surrender.

YOGA OF SELF-SURRENDER—II

Give up egoism and throw your whole burden of anxieties on the Lord. Do total self-surrender to Him. You will attain His grace. He will take care of you completely in all ways.

In difficulties and struggles, God will give you strength and inner peace to bear them. This is His grace.

Constant remembrance of the Lord, constant recitation of His Name will fill your heart with Sattva or purity and

immense strength and peace to face the most trying conditions with perfect calmness and serenity.

Have perfect trust in God. Do total surrender unto Him. Place yourself in His loving care. Do this with your whole heart and mind, with perfect confidence and faith. Worry not about your future, about money, about your health. He will take care of you. You will have plenty, immense strength and wonderful health.

Repeat this formula very often with intense faith: "The Lord is my strength, my support and stay." You will derive strength, power and peace.

After surrendering to the Lord, do not grumble if you get difficulties and troubles. This goes against self-surrender.

God knows what is best for you. He does what is best for you. His ways are mysterious. Know His mysterious ways and become wise.

Egoism and desire are obstacles to self-surrender. Slay these two enemies of self-surrender ruthlessly.

You may accuse Him now and say: "He is not just. He is cruel. He has no eyes. Vicious persons are thriving well in the world. I am virtuous and I suffer. There is no God." Later on you will realise that He has done the best thing for you.

Do not pray to the Lord for removal of sufferings. Pray to Him for granting you power of endurance and patience to bear the calamity.

A devotee remains unaffected by adversities, trials and tribulations. He knows and feels that they are all Karmic purgations and are the real messengers of God; he welcomes them calmly.

A devotee alone gets troubles and adversities, because this is his last birth; many Karmas have to be worked out and he must be united with the Lord in this very birth.

He gives immense patience and strength to His devotee to bear troubles and calamities. The devotee is ever calm and cheerful. He is not in the least affected by them as his mind ever dwells in the contemplation of the Lord. He has no body-consciousness.

Murmur not, grumble not. Even a leaf cannot move without the Will of God. What is destined to take place as willed by God, takes place. Face every difficulty and the battle of life with a smile patiently and heroically. Become a brave soldier. Become an Adhyatmic hero.

Troubles and difficulties come to intensify your faith, to strenghten your will and power of endurance and turn your mind more and more towards God.

Pain is a great eye-opener. It is your silent teacher. It is the only best thing in the world. It will make you remember God. Kunti prayed: "O God! Lord Krishna! Give me pain always, so that I may ever remember You."

The more troubles and adversities you get, the stronger and firmer will become your faith in God. The worst troubles and adversities that come to you have the greatest purpose and meaning in them. They will mould you into a divine being. Welcome them and say: "I am Thine, all is Thine, Thy Will be done, my Lord."

Approach the Lord with Sarva-Bhava with all your heart, mind and soul, with your whole being. Do not keep any reservation. Do not keep any secret gratification. The mind, Chitta, intellect and the ego should all agree to surrender wholly. You will be supremely blessed. You will obtain His full grace.

Prahlada, Mira and Sakku Bai were tortured in various ways. But the Lord gave them strength and peace. They did not feel torture even a bit. He gave them Darshan and blessed them.

Lord's grace is in proportion to the degree of self-surrender. The more the surrender, the more is His grace.

HARVEST OF GOD-REALISATION

Faith is the seed;
Divine grace is the rain;
Prayer is the plough;
Self-surrender is the rein;
Worship is the handle;
Meditation is the ox;
Devotion is the goal;
Ploughing is weeding
'I'-ness and 'mine'-ness;
The harvest is God-realisation,
Which removes all sorrows and pains,
And bestows everlasting peace,
joy and eternal satisfaction.

SIVA'S KIRTAN

For some, Kirtan or singing Lord's Name has no value. Even some Sadhus and Sannyasins have not realised the most potent effects of Kirtan. Kirtan does what Vedantic Nididhyasana and Yogic Samyama can do. It removes at once impurities of the heart, tossing of mind, and the veil of ignorance without much prolonged effort. That is the beauty of Kirtan. That is the marvellous benefit of Kirtan.

For some wise persons Kirtan is the only Sadhana. Sri C.R. Das remarked when he got down from the train at Lahore "I am very hungry for hearing Kirtan." Tukaram, Mira, Saint Rup Kala, Saint Ram Das, Kabir, Purandara Das, Gouranga lived in Kirtan alone. It was their food, mental, spiritual and physical.

Some dry lip-Vedantins only pooh-pooh Kirtan. Real Vedantins do Kirtan. One cannot live without Kirtan. Even the lip-Vedantin does Kirtan consciously or unconsciously but arrogantly speaks against Kirtan to show to the world that he is a great Advaita Vedantin who is upholding the doctrine of Ajati Vada or the theory of non-evolution of the world. If he does Kirtan, the public will not consider

him as an Advaita Vedantin. All persons of this world are Kirtanists. Even the breeze, trees, brooks, ocean-waves, burning fire, churning of curd, grinding of grinding stones, the beetles and the whistling of the engine sing Hari Om.

Siva's Kirtan is unique and unprecedented. It is quite a novel one. It has a charm of its own. It is Japa Sadhana or Mantra Yoga. Panchakshara, Ashtakshara, Devi's Mantras are sung rhythmically.

There are stirring Dhvanis or Namavalis to instil a new spirit and gushing joy in the hearts of the hearers. There are lulling Dhvanis to soothe the brain and nerves. There are Nama Kirtan, Guna Kirtan, Lila Kirtan and Yasha Kirtan Dhvanis. There is the Universal Kirtan. The names of the saints and prophets of all religions are sung. There are "Shooting Dhvanis" to awaken people when they sleep at night. There are two-party and three-party Dhvanis. There is the closing "Santi Patha Dhvani." There are mixture or Manipravala Kirtan of Sanskrit, Hindi, Tamil, English, Urdu and Telugu. There are Nagar Kirtan and Akhanda Kirtan Dhvanis. There are Garjan or roaring Dhvanis of OM, RAM, which stir people. There are Jayajayakar Dhvanis. There are beautiful Vedantic Kirtan songs and Dhvanis. Ramayana and Bhagavata are sung in Kirtan form.

There are prayer and Stuti Dhvanis. There are Guru Vandana Dhvanis. There are Dhvanis for every Devata. There are songs with Dhvanis on Bhakti, Yoga, Vedanta, Sadhana, Philosophy and Upanishads.

Even rank materialists and atheists are moved by Siva's Kirtan. They sing and dance. Europeans, Christians, Muslims, Americans, sing his Kirtan and songs. Those who hate Kirtan become votaries of Kirtan. They find his Kirtan very palatable and relishing and soul-elevating.

May you all attain God-realisation easily and quickly through Kirtan!

Glory to the Lord and His Name which helps one to cross the formidable ocean of Samsara! Glory to Lord Gouranga, the father of Kirtan, Avatara of Sri Krishna and Radha! Glory to Siva, the modern Kirtan Samrat, who caters Kirtan to modern taste—Eastern and Western.

DEVI KIRTAN

1. Durgati nasini Durge Jaya Jaya,
   Kala vinasini Kali Jaya Jaya,
   Uma Rama Brahmani Jaya Jaya,
   Radha Sita Rukmini Jaya Jaya,
   Lakshmi Saraswati Amba Jaya Jaya,
   Parvati Ganga Devi Jaya Jaya.

2. *Tune: Narayana Achyuta Govinda Madhava Kesava...*

   Rajeswari Bhuvaneswari,
   Durgati nasini Kripamurti.
   Mahalakshmi Parvati
   Kala vinasini Kali Devi

3. *Tune: Radhe Krishna Shyama Murari Govinda Gopala Hare....*

   Gouri Durga Parvati Gange—
   Tripura Sundari Daya Karo
   Tripura Sundari Daya Karo.

4. *Tune: Gopala Gopala Muraliwala*
   Jaya Gouri Jaya Gouri Sri Durga Mata
   Mahamaye Para Sakti Premasvarupi.
   Jaya Vani Jaya Vani Sri Mahalakshmi
   Parvati Jagadamba Jaya Maha Kali.
   Gayatri Savitri Meenakshi Devi
   Tripura Sundari Jaya Mahadevi.

5. *Tune: Achyutam Kesavam....*
   Chandike Kalike Hey Jaganmatrike
   Bharati Bhamini Bhakta Janapriye
   Sarada Sri Durge Sarva Satyatmike
   Yoginam Manase Sarvada Pujite.

Jaya Gouri Jaya Gouri Jaya Gouri Sri Durge
Jaya Kali Jaya Mata Mahamaye Mahasakti
Jaya Vani Jaya Vani Jaya Vani Saraswati
Jaya Devi Jaya Devi Jaya Devi Sri Devi.
(Akhilandanayike)

Sarva Yantratmike Sarva Tantratmike
Sarva Mantratmike Sarva Mudratmike
Sarva Satyatmike Sarva Chakratmike
Sarva Varnatmike Srikare Syamike.

Gayatri Savitri Raja Rajeswari
Bhagavati Bhairavi Tripura Sundari
Sri Vani Vangmayi Vijnana Dayini
Chidrupi Chinmayi Advaye Pahi mam.

6. *Tune: Hara Hara Siva Siva Sambho*
Jaya Gouri Jaya Durga Mata,
Jaya Gouri Jaya Durge Jaya Kalimata.
Jaya Gouri Mata Jaya Kalimata,
Jaya Gouri Jaya Durga Mata.

7. *Tune: Jaya Rama Sri Radhe Krishna Bhajale Sita Ram*
Jaya Sita Sri Radhe Rukmini, Bhajale Parvati
Bhajale Parvati Pyare Bhajale Mahalakshmi.
Jaya Vani Sri Mahalakshmi Bhajale Sri Durga
Bhajale Sri Durga Pyare Bhajale Sri Sarada.
Bhajale Chandi Sri Chamundesvari
Bhajale Jagadamba
Bhajale Jagadamba Pyare Bhajale Jaganmata.
Jaya Kali Sri Katyayani Bhajale Kamakshi
Bhajale Kamakshi Pyare Bhajale Gomati.
Jaya Durga Sri Tripurasundari Bhajale Bhairavi
Bhajale Bhairavi Pyare Bhajale Bhamini.
Jaya Sakti Sri Adi Sakti Bhajale Para Sakti
Bhajale Parasakti Pyare Bhajale Mahasakti.

8. Devika Premi Durga Bolo
Sakti Sakti Bolo Adisakti Bolo
Lakshmi Lakshmi Bolo Mahalakshmi Bolo

Kali Kali Bolo Mahakali Bolo.
Mahakali Bolna Mahalakshmi Bolna
Adisakti Bolna Parasakti Bolna
Moola Prakriti Bolna Prakriti Vikriti Bolna
Durga Durga Bolna Hrim Kali Bolna
Rajeswari Bolna Maheswari Bolna
Ganga Ganga Bolna Bhagirathi Bolna
Tripura Sundari Bolna Vak Devi Bolna
Vani Devi Bolna Vak Devi Bolna.

9. *Tune: Bhajo Radhe Krishna Bhajo Radhe Shyama....*
Bhajo Tripurasundari Bhajo Chandi Kalike
Bhajo Jaganmata Bhajo Jagat Janani.
Bhajo Jagadambika Bhajo Trigunatmike
Bhajo Mahakanya Bhajo Saraswati.
Bhajo Mahadevi Bhajo Mahasakti
Bhajo Vageeswari Bhajo Vagdevi.
Bhajo Bhadrakali Bhajo Bhavanasini
Bhajo Janamodini Bhajo Nandini.

10. *Tune: Hare Krishna Hare Rama Radhe Govinda*
Mahalakshmi Mahakali Durgamata
Adisakti Mahasakti Parasakti
Bhajo Durga Mata Bhajo Parasakti
Durga Bolo Bolo Tumko Lakhon Pranam.

11. Jaya Jaya Durga Lakshmi
Jaya Bolo Maha Saraswati
Jaya Jaya Durga Saraswati
Jaya Bolo Maha Saraswati
Jaya Jaya Umasankari
Jaya Jaya Uma Parvati
Jaya Jaya Sita Janaki
Jaya Jaya Radha Rukmini
Jaya Jaya Raja Rajeswari
Jaya Jaya Tripurasundari
Jaya Jaya Mahalakshmi
Jaya Jaya Mahakali

12. *Tune: Narayana Achyuta Govinda Madhava Keshava*
Rajeswari Maheswari Tripurasundari Mateswari
Mahalakshmi Saraswati Varaprasadini Vageeswari

13. Lakshmi Saraswati Janaki Bolo
Umasakti Kali Bhajo
Umasakti Kali Bhajo

14. Gouri Gouri Gange Mahakali ..... Rajeswari.
Gouri Gouri Gange Mahalakshmi .....Bhuvaneswari.
Gouri Gouri Gange Parvati ..... Maheswari.

15. Vani Saraswati Vak Devi
Bhagavati Bharati Mam Pahi.

16. Ganga Gita Gayatri Om
Goura Govinda Gurudeva Om
Ganga Gita Gomata Om
Goura Govinda Gurudeva Om

17. Vidya Lakshmi Vijaya Lakshmi
Veerya Lakshmi Om
Vara Lakshmi Vinaya Lakshmi
Vijnana Lakshmi Om
Dhana Lakshmi Dhanya Lakshmi
Dhairya Lakshmi Om
Maha Lakshmi Moksha Lakshmi
Nitya Lakshmi Om
Siddha Lakshmi Sarva Lakshmi
Soumya Lakshmi Om
Sri Lakshmi Suddha Lakshmi
Soubhagya Lakshmi Om
Kanaka Lakshmi Karunya Lakshmi
Kripa Lakshmi Om
Gaja Lakshmi Raja Lakshmi
Pankaja Lakshmi Om
Adi Lakshmi Ananda Lakshmi
Aiswarya Lakshmi Om
Jaya Lakshmi Jagad Lakshmi
Jnana Lakshmi Om

18. *Tune: Rama Rama Namostute Jaya....*
Durga Durga Namostute Jaya
Duritaharini Namostute
Chandi Chandi Namostute Jaya
Chamundeswari Namostute
Deenoddharini Namostute Jaya
Daya Pareswari Namostute
Veena Pani Namostute Jaya
Vidya Devi Namostute
Jaganmate Namostute Jaya
Jagadambike Namostute
Viswa Vimohini Namostute Jaya
Viswa Visalakshi Namostute
Vishnu Patni Namostute Jaya
Viswa Vidhayini Namostute
Varapradayini Namostute Jaya
Vishnu Maye Namostute
Radha Rukmini Namostute Jaya
Sita Janaki Namostute
Parvati Gouri Namostute jaya
Umamaheswari Namostute
Mahalakshmi Namostute Jaya
Mahakali Namostute
Mahasakti Namostute Jaya
Maha Maye Namostute
Prakriti Vikriti Namostute Jaya
Patita Pavani Namostute
Payodhikanye Namostute Jaya
Parameswari Namostute
Ganga Rani Namostute Jaya
Bhagirathi Namostute
Jahnukanye Namostute Jaya
Papaharini Namostute

19. *Tune: Govinda Jaya Jaya Gopala Jaya Jaya....*
Lakshmiki Jaya Jaya Deviki Jaya Jaya
Aiswarya Dayini Ambaki Jaya Jaya

Vaniki Jaya Jaya Lakshmiki Jaya Jaya
Vidya Pradayini Brahmani Jaya Jaya
Sarada Jaya Jaya Sri Durga Jaya Jaya
Tripurasundari Sankari Jaya Jaya
Kaliki Jaya Jaya Chandiki Jaya Jaya
Durgati Nasini Durgaki Jaya Jaya
Bharati Jaya Jaya Bhamini Jaya Jaya
Bhaktajanapriya Bhairavi Jaya Jaya
Gayatri Jaya Jaya Savitri Jaya Jaya
Raja Rajeswari Sundari Jaya Jaya
Sitaki Jaya Jaya Radhaki Jaya Jaya
Abhaya Pradayini Ambaki Jaya Jaya
Gouriki Jaya Jaya Gangeki Jaya Jaya
Papavinasini Parvati Jaya Jaya
Kamakshi Jaya Jaya Meenakshi Jaya Jaya
Kasi Visalakshi Gomati Jaya Jaya
Saktiki Jaya Jaya Mataki Jaya Jaya
Mokshapradayini Deviki Jaya Jaya

20. *Tune: Jaya Govindam Jaya Gopala*
Kesava Madhava Deenadayal

Jaya Vageeswari Jaya Vani
Vijnanadayini Sri Vani
Jaya Jnaneswari Jaya Devi
Viswavimohini Sri Devi
Jaya Rajeswari Jaya Lalite
Jayamanamohini Sri Lalite
Jaya Visweswari Jaya Mata
Tripurasundari Sri Mata
Jaya Durgamata Jaya Kali
Varapradayini Varalakshmi
Jaya Mateswari Jaya Sakti
Jaya Katyayani Jaya Lakshmi
Jaya Chamundeswari Jaya Uma
Bhairavi Bhamini Jaya Gouri
Jaya Nidheeswari Maha Lakshmi
Jaya Karunanidhi Jaya Kalyani

HARI KIRTAN DHVANIS

Jaya Narayana, Jaya Narayana,
Jaya Narayana, Jaya Jaya Jaya.
Jaya Narayana, Jaya Narayana,
Jaya Narayana, Jaya Jaya Jaya.
Jaya Siyaram Jaya, Jaya Siyaram Jaya,
Jaya Siyaram Jaya, Jaya Jaya Jaya.
Jaya Siyaram Jaya, Jaya Siyaram Jaya,
Jaya Siyaram Jaya, Jaya Jaya Jaya.
Jaya Radheshyam Jaya, Jaya Radheshyam Jaya,
Jaya Radheshyam Jaya, Jaya Jaya Jaya.
Jaya Radheshyam Jaya, Jaya Radheshyam Jaya,
Jaya Radheshyam Jaya, Jaya Jaya Jaya.
(Jaya Narayana....)

NARAYANA-SADASIVA KIRTAN

Apat Bandhava	Narayana
Anatha Rakshaka	Sadasiva
Deenabandho	Narayana
Deenanatha	Sadasiva
Karunasagara	Narayana
Kripa Sindho	Sadasiva
Bhakta Vatsala	Narayana
Saranagatavatsala	Sadasiva
Adhamoddharana	Narayana
Patita Pavana	Sadasiva
Bhakta Poshaka	Narayana
Mukti Dayaka	Sadasiva
Vibhu Viswanatha	Narayana
Prabhu Prananatha	Sadasiva
Adideva	Narayana
Deva Deva	Sadasiva
Adiguru	Narayana
Jagad Guru	Sadasiva
Vaikunthapathy	Narayana
Kailasapathy	Sadasiva
Hari Om Hari Om	Narayana
Hara Om Hara Om	Sadasiva

Om Om Om Om	Narayana
Bum Bum Bum Bum	Sadasiva
Ram Ram Ram Ram	Narayana
Bum Bum Bum Bum	Sadasiva
Hari Hari Hari Hari	Narayana
Hara Hara Hara Hara	Sadasiva
Achyuta Kesava	Narayana
Sambho Sankara	Sadasiva
Satchidananda	Narayana
Akhanda Paripoorna	Sadasiva
Pahimam Trahimam	Narayana
Pahimam Rakshamam	Sadasiva
Praseeda Praseeda	Narayana
Prachodayat Prachodayat	Sadasiva
Come Come O Lord	Narayana
Give me Darshan	Sadasiva
Give me light	Narayana
Impart wisdom	Sadasiva
Save me protect me	Narayana
Guide me liberate me	Sadasiva

About This Book:

ESSENCE OF BHAKTI YOGA

In the Essence of Bhakti Yoga has been laid out in great detail the course of Bhakti Yoga from start to finish. Every milestone had been clearly indicated. Every next step towards the goal has been carefully guided. Every chance of getting into despondency has been eliminated and by going into minute details every effort has been made to rescue the despondent soul.

Bhakti Yoga is not without its method, though it is the method of striking the fountain of emotional sweetness and rightly guiding the leaping nectar of devotional striving. Properly canalised it leads to speedy self-fulfilment. As such, Bhakti Yoga is a hidden science.

To shed light on this difficult Science is beyond the powers of the intellect and the imagination, and is possible only for one who has experimented the principles of this Science on himself and realised its truths.

The Essence of Bhakti Yoga coming as it does from the inspired pen of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is, therefore, a rare opportunity for the reading public and the surest guide for the Bhakti Yogi aspirant. It unfolds in the simplest language the secrets of the emotions of "Bhakti" or Divine Love. It analyses the whole psychology of Bhakti and explains the significance of every element of it. It gives ample guidance in the difficult art of building those elements which constitute the psychosis of God-consciousness. It makes the practice of God's presence easy.

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